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The writings of Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin

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THE WRITINGS OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

VOLUME VII

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CONTENTS

VOLUME VII

NO.		PAGE
815.	Comparison of Great Britain and the United States in regard to the Basis of Credit in the Two Countries. 1777	1
816.	To the Committee of Secret Correspondence. January 4, 1777	9
817.	To Mrs. Mary Hewson. January 12, 1777	10
818.	To Juliana Ritchie. January 19, 1777	11
819.	To John Hancock. January 20, 1777	12
820.	To Thomas Morris. January 26, 1777	13
821.	To M. Montaudouin. January 26, 1777	13
822.	To Mrs. Mary Hewson. January 26, 1777	15
823.	Instructions to Captain Samuel Nicholson. January 26, 1777	16
824.	To Joseph Priestley. January 27, 1777	18
825.	Resolutions of the Commissioners in Paris. February 2, 1777	19
826.	To Jonathan Williams. February 5, 1777	21
827.	To Lord George Germain. February 7, 1777	22
828.	To Mrs. Thompson [at Lille]. February 8, 1777	23
829.	The Sale of the Hessians. From the Count de Schaumbergh to the Baron Hohendorf, Commanding the Hessian Troops in America. February 18, 1777	27
830.	To Richard Peters. March 6, 1777	30
831.	To Arthur Lee. March 21, 1777	31
832.	Model of a Letter of Recommendation. April 2, 1777	36
833.	To Lord Stormont. April 2, 1777	36
834.	To M. Lith. April 6, 1777	38
835.	To Conde d'Aranda. April 7, 1777	40
836.	To C. Rybot. April 9, 1777	41
837.	To Richard Bache. April 14, 1777	43
838.	To the Bishop of Tricomia. April 22, 1777	43
839.	To Viscount de Ponté de Lima. April 26, 1777	45

Digitized by Google

NO.		PAGE
840.	To Jan Ingenhousz. April 26, 1777	47
841.	Jan Ingenhousz to Benjamin Franklin. June 28, 1777	52
842.	To Thomas Cushing. May 1, 1777	54
843.	To Samuel Cooper. May 1, 1777	55
844.	To John Winthrop. May 1, 1777	57
845.	To George Washington. June 13, 1777	58
846.	To George Washington. June 13, 1777	59
847.	To Captain Henry Johnson. July 22, 1777	60
848.	Bernardin de Saint Pierre to Benjamin Franklin. August 19, 1777	60
849.	To George Washington. August, 1777	61
850.	To George Washington. September 4, 1777	63
851.	To Richard Peters. September 12, 1777	64
852.	To —— ? October 4, 1777	64
853.	To James Lovell. October 7, 1777	65
854.	To the Marquis de Condorcet. October 12, 1777	67
855.	To David Hartley. October 14, 1777	68
856.	To Captains Thomas Thompson and Elisha Hinman. November 25, 1777	73
857.	To Major Thornton. December 11, 1777	75
858.	To Sir Grey Cooper. December 11, 1777	76
859.	To James Lovell. December 21, 1777	77
860.	To Jonathan Williams. December 22, 1777	78
861.	To the Hon^{ble} Council of the Massachusetts State. December 29, 1777	79
862.	To a Friend. 1777 ?	80
863.	A Dialogue between Britain, France, Spain, Holland, Saxony and America. ? 1777	82
864.	A Catechism relating to the English National Debt. 1777	86
865.	To Jan Ingenhousz. ? 1777	88
866.	To Ralph Izard. January 29, 1778	97
867.	To James Hutton. February 1, 1778	98
868.	To David Hartley. February 12, 1778	101
869.	To Conrad Alexandre Gérard de Rayneval. February 22, 1778	104
870.	To Arthur Lee. February 23, 1778	105
871.	To Conrad Alexandre Gérard de Rayneval. February 24, 1778	106
872.	To Conrad Alexandre Gérard de Rayneval. February 25, 1778	107

Digitized by Google

NO.		PAGE
873.	To David Hartley. February 26, 1778	107
874.	To Thomas Cushing. February 27, 1778	110
875.	To Mrs. Catherine Greene. February 28, 1778	112
876.	To Jonathan Williams. February (?), 1778	113
877.	To Samuel Adams. March 2, 1778	114
878.	To William Lee. March 2, 1778	115
879.	To William Lee. March 6, 1778	116
880.	A True History of the Difference between the Colonies and the Author of the Stamp Act. March 12, 1778	118
881.	To Arthur Lee. March 17, 1778	121
882.	To James Hutton. March 24, 1778	122
883.	To Ralph Izard. March 30, 1778	123
884.	To William Pulteney. March 30, 1778	124
885.	To Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bache. March 31, 1778	126
886.	To Henry Laurens. March 31, 1778	127
887.	To Henry Laurens. March 31, 1778	128
888.	To Conrad Alexandre Gérard de Rayneval. April 1, 1778	128
889.	To Arthur Lee. April 1, 1778	129
890.	From Arthur Lee to Benjamin Franklin. April 2, 1778	130
891.	To Arthur Lee. April 3, 1778	132
892.	To Arthur Lee. April 4, 1778	132
893.	To Arthur Lee. April 6, 1778	137
894.	To Charles W. F. Dumas. April 10, 1778	138
895.	To the Grand Pensionary of Holland. April 10, 1778	141
896.	To Edward Bancroft. April 16, 1778	141
897.	From David Hartley to Benjamin Franklin, and Dr. Franklin's Answer. April 23, 1778	142
898.	To Comte de Vergennes. April 24, 1778	143
899.	From Comte de Vergennes to Benjamin Franklin. April 25, 1778	146
900.	To John Ross. April 26, 1778	146
901.	From Benjamin Vaughan to Benjamin Franklin. April 28, 1778	149
902.	To Arthur Lee. May 17, 1778	154
903.	To David Hartley. May 25, 1778	155
904.	To John Paul Jones. May 27, 1778	156
905.	To John Paul Jones. June 1, 1778	157
906.	To John Paul Jones. June 10, 1778	158
907.	To Georgelin Du Cosquer. June 11, 1778	160
908.	To David Hartley. June 16, 1778	161

Digitized by Google

NO.		PAGE
909.	To James Hutton. June 23, 1778	162
910.	To Captain Sainneville. June 23, 1778	163
911.	To A. Borel. June 24, 1778	163
912.	Proposed Letter to Lord North concerning Prisoners. June, 1778	164
913.	To Charles de Weissenstein. July 1, 1778	166
914.	To Ferdinand Grand. July 3, 1778	173
915.	To David Hartley. July 13, 1778	174
916.	To James Lovell. July 22, 1778	174
917.	To Chevalier de Champigny. July 24, 1778	181
918.	To Comte de Vergennes. July 25, 1778	184
919.	To William Lee. August 13, 1778	184
920.	To M. de Sartine. August 18, 1778	185
921.	To David Hartley. September 3, 1778	186
922.	To John Paul Jones. September 6, 1778	187
923.	To David Hartley. September 14, 1778	188
924.	To Charles W. F. Dumas. September 22, 1778	189
925.	To Ferdinand Grand. October 14, 1778	190
926.	To Comte de Vergennes. October 20, 1778	192
927.	To David Hartley. October 20, 1778	192
928.	To Comte de Vergennes. October 22, 1778	194
929.	To David Hartley. October 26, 1778	194
930.	To Ferdinand Grand. November 3, 1778	198
931.	To John Ross. November 5, 1778	199
932.	To M. Baron. November 20, 1778	201
933.	To Job Prince. November 20, 1778	201
934.	To M. Baron. November 21, 1778	202
935.	To William Temple Franklin. November 26, 1778	203
936.	To David Hartley. November 29, 1778	203
• 937.	To Abbé de la Roche. December 7, 1778	204
• 938.	À Madame Helvétius. ? 1778	204
• 939.	The Ephemera. ? 1778	206
940.	Aurora Borealis. ? 1778	209
941.	To Arthur Lee. January 3, 1779	215
942.	To Ralph Izard. January 4, 1779	216
943.	To the Committee of Foreign Affairs. January 15, 1779	218
944.	To David Hartley. January 25, 1779	219
945.	To Mrs. Margaret Stevenson. January 25, 1779	220
946.	To Messrs. Lloyd and others. January 26, 1779	223
947.	From David Hartley to Benjamin Franklin. January 23, 1779	225

Digitized by Google

NO.		PAGE
948.	To David Hartley. February 3, 1779	226
949.	To Jonathan Williams. February 13, 1779	229
950.	To Comte de Vergennes. February 14, 1779	231
951.	To Charles W. F. Dumas. February 19, 1779	231
952.	To David Hartley. February 22, 1779	232
953.	To David Hartley. February 22, 1779	234
954.	To Comte de Vergennes. February 25, 1779	234
955.	To Comte de Vergennes. February 25, 1779	238
956.	To Patrick Henry. February 26, 1779	238
957.	To Jean de Neufville. February 28, 1779	240
958.	To Comte de Vergennes. March 9, 1779	241
959.	Passport for Captain Cook. March 10, 1779	242
960.	To MM. Hills, Parkes, Adams, Degge, Buckley, Elwood, and Warren, Officers on board the *Alliance*. March 11, 1779	243
961.	To Arthur Lee. March 13, 1779	245
962.	To Arthur Lee. March 13, 1779	246
963.	From John Paul Jones to Benjamin Franklin. March 6, 1779	248
964.	To John Paul Jones. March 14, 1779	253
965.	To Richard Oliver. March 14, 1779	255
966.	Passport for Richard Oliver. March 14, 1779	255
967.	To Jonathan Williams. March 16, 1779	256
968.	To Joshua Johnson. March 17, 1779	258
969.	To M. Montaudouin. March 17, 1779	260
970.	To William McCreery. March 18, 1779	261
971.	To Charles W. F. Dumas. March 18, 1779	262
972.	To Jonathan Williams. March 19, 1779	263
973.	To Daniel-Marc-Antoine Chardon. March 19, 1779	265
974.	To Madam Conway. March 25, 1779	266
975.	To David Hartley. March 21, 1779	267
976.	To the Marquis de Lafayette. March 22, 1779	269
977.	To Arthur Lee. March 27, 1779	271
978.	To Arthur Lee. March 27, 1779	273
979.	To Stephen Sayre. March 31, 1779	274
980.	To William Lee. April 2, 1779	276
981.	To John Adams. April 3, 1779	277
982.	To Arthur Lee. April 3, 1779	278
983.	To Joshua Johnson. April 8, 1779	279
984.	To John Adams. April 8, 1779	280

Digitized by Google

NO.		PAGE
985.	To Captain Peter Landais. April 8, 1779	281
986.	To Jonathan Williams. April 8, 1779	281
987.	To Messrs. Wharton, Ridley, Johnson, Mease, Ross, Nesbit, Cummings, Gridley, and Schweighauser, American Merchants, now at Nantes. April 8, 1779	283
988.	Passport for a Moravian Vessel. April 11, 1779	285
989.	From Jean-Paul Marat to Benjamin Franklin. April 12, 1779	286
990.	To M. de Sartine. April 18, 1779	287
991.	To John Adams. April 21, 1779	287
992.	To John Quincy Adams. April 21, 1779	288
993.	To Josiah Quincy. April 22, 1779	289
994.	From Samuel Cooper to Benjamin Franklin. January 4, 1779	291
995.	To Samuel Cooper. April 22, 1779	292
996.	To John Adams. April 24, 1779	295
997.	To John Paul Jones. April 27, 1779	296
998.	To Arthur Lee. May 3, 1779	300
999.	To Thomas Viny. May 4, 1779	301
1000.	To Mrs. Patience Wright. May 4, 1779	302
1001.	To John Lloyd. May 4, 1779	304
1002.	From David Hartley to Benjamin Franklin. April 22, 1779	305
1003.	To David Hartley. May 4, 1779	309
1004.	To M. de Sartine. May 8, 1779	312
1005.	To M. de Chaumont. May 10, 1779	313
1006.	To John Adams. May 10, 1779	314
1007.	To Major-General John Beckwith. May 17, 1779	315
1008.	To the Committee of Foreign Affairs. May 26, 1779	317
1009.	To Sir Edward Newenham. May 27, 1779	331
1010.	To Comte de Vergennes (?) June 1, 1779	332
1011.	To Horatio Gates. June 2, 1779	333
1012.	To James Lovell. June 2, 1779	334
1013.	To Charles Carroll of Carrollton. June 2, 1779	337
1014.	To the Marine Committee of Congress. June 2, 1779	338
1015.	To John Jay. June 2, 1779	341
1016.	To Richard Bache. June 2, 1779	343
1017.	To Richard Bache. June 2, 1779	344
1018.	To Mrs. Sarah Bache. June 3, 1779	346
1019.	To Francis Hopkinson. June 4, 1779	350
1020.	To William Greene. June 4, 1779	351

Digitized by Google

NO.		PAGE
1021.	To the Council of Massachusetts Bay. June 4, 1779	353
1022.	To John Adams. June 5, 1779	354
1023.	To Messrs. J. Rocquette, A. Elsevier, and Brothers Rocquette. June 13, 1779	356
1024.	The Morals of Chess. June, 1779	357
1025.	To Alexander Gillon. July 5, 1779	362
1026.	To Jonathan Williams. July 8, 1779	363
1027.	To John Paul Jones. July 8, 1779	364
1028.	To Barbeu Dubourg. August 13, 1779	365
1029.	To the Marquis de Lafayette. August 19, 1779	366
1030.	To Benjamin Franklin Bache. August 19, 1779	368
1031.	To Mr. Cramer. August 19, 1779	369
1032.	To the Marquis de Lafayette. August 24, 1779	370
1033.	From the Marquis de Lafayette to Benjamin Franklin. August 29, 1779	371
1034.	To Charles Epp. August 27, 1779	371
1035.	To John D. Schweighauser. September 17, 1779	372
1036.	To Pierre Jean Georges Cabanis. September 19, 1779	375
1037.	To Pierre Jean Georges Cabanis. September ? 1779	376
1038.	To Comte de Vergennes. September 26, 1779	376
1039.	To Jonathan Nesbitt. September 29, 1779	377
1040.	To James Lovell. September 30, 1779	378
1041.	To Arthur Lee. September 30, 1779	379
1042.	To the Marquis de Lafayette. October 1, 1779	380
1043.	To Edward Bridgen. October 2, 1779	381
1044.	To John Jay. October 4, 1779	382
1045.	To Mrs. Elizabeth Partridge. October 11, 1779	393
1046.	To John Paul Jones. October 15, 1779	395
1047.	To Captain Peter Landais. October 15, 1779	397
1048.	To the Commissioners of the Navy for the Eastern Department. October 17, 1779	398
1049.	To James Lovell. October 17, 1779	400
1050.	To Jonathan Loring Austin. October 20, 1779	403
1051.	To M. Stadel. October 20, 1779	404
1052.	To the Commercial Committee of Congress. October 21, 1779	405
1053.	To a Friend in America. October 25, 1779	406
1054.	To Samuel Cooper. October 27, 1779	407
1055.	To Jean Holker. October 28, 1779	409
1056.	To Messrs. Fizeaux and Grand. October 28, 1779	409

Digitized by Google

NO.		PAGE
1057.	To Benjamin Vaughan. November 9, 1779	410
1058.	The Whistle. November 10, 1779	414
1059.	From Mlle. Le Veillard to Benjamin Franklin. November 18, 1779	417
1060.	To Giambatista Beccaria. November 19, 1779	417
1061.	To Captain Conyngham. November 22, 1779	418
1062.	To John Paul Jones. December 6, 1779	419
1063.	To Andres Peder, Count Bernstorff. December 22, 1779	420
1064.	To Joshua Johnson. December 29, 1779	424

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TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

A. P. S.	American Philosophical Society.
B. M.	British Museum.
B. N.	Bibliothèque Nationale.
D. S. W.	Department of State, Washington.
H.	Harvard University.
L. C.	Library of Congress.
L. L.	Lenox Library.
Lans.	Lansdowne House.
M. H. S.	Massachusetts Historical Society.
P. C.	Private Collection.
P. H. S.	Pennsylvania Historical Society.
P. R. O.	Public Record Office.
P. R. O. A. W. I.	Public Record Office: America and West Indies.
P. A. E. E. U.	Paris Departement des Affaires Etrangères, — Etats-Unis.
U. of P.	University of Pennsylvania.
Y.	Yale University.
B.	Bigelow.
F.	Benjamin Franklin.
S.	Sparks.
V.	Benjamin Vaughan.
W. T. F.	W. T. Franklin.

Franklin's Mss. exist in several forms. He made a rough draft of every letter that he wrote; he then made a clean copy to send away, and often retained a letter-press copy. To indicate the state of the document, the following abbreviations are used: d. = draft, trans. = transcript, l. p. = letter-press copy.

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815. COMPARISON

OF GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES

IN REGARD TO

THE BASIS OF CREDIT IN THE TWO COUNTRIES[1] (L. C.)

In the Affair of Borrowing Money, a Man's Credit depends on some, or all, of the following Particulars.

1. His known Conduct with regard to former Loans, in the Punctuality with which he discharg'd them.

2. His Industry in his Business.

3. His frugality in his Expences.

4. The Solidity of his Funds, his Estate being good, and free of prior Debts, whence his undoubted Ability of paying.

5. His well-founded Prospects of greater future Ability, by the Improvement of his Estate in Value, and by Aids from others.

6. His known Prudence in Managing his general Affairs, and the Advantage they will probably receive from the present Loan he desires.

[1] This paper was written in 1777 and was intended to increase the jealousy the Dutch and other moneyed people in Europe began to entertain of the English funds, and thereby to facilitate the loan of £2,000,000 sterling in compliance with the resolution of Congress, December 23, 1776. It was translated into several languages, and was widely circulated. It is here printed from the draft in L. C. Another autograph transcript exists in The University of Pennsylvania. A gentleman in Prague, Mr. Fritz Donebauer, has two Ms. copies of it, one in English, the other a translation by Ingenhousz into French; the latter evidently intended for Maria Theresa. — ED.

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7. His known Virtue and honest Character, manifested by his voluntary Discharge of Debts, which he could not otherwise have been oblig'd to pay. The same Circumstances, that give a private Man credit, ought to have, and will have, their Weight with Lenders of Money to *publick Bodies* or to Nations. If then we consider and compare Britain and America in those several Lights, upon the Question, "To which is it safest to lend Money?" we shall find,

1. With regard to *former Loans*, that America borrowed Ten Millions Sterling during the last War, for the Maintenance of her Army of 25,000 Men and other Charges, had faithfully *discharged* and *paid* that Debt, and all her other Debts, in 1772. Whereas Britain, during those ten years of Peace and profitable Commerce, had made little or no Reduction of her Debt; but on the contrary from time to time diminish'd the Hopes of her Creditors by a wanton Diversion and Misapplication of the Sinking Fund which had been destin'd for the Discharging of it.

2. *With Regard to Industry in Business;* Every Man in America is employ'd; the greatest Number in cultivating their own Lands, the rest in Handicrafts, Navigation, and Commerce. An idle man there is a rarity; Idleness and Inutility is a character of Disgrace. In England the Quantity of that Character is immense; Fashion has spread it far and wide. Hence the Embarassment of private Fortunes, and the daily Bankruptcies, arising from the universal fondness for Appearance and expensive Pleasures; and hence, in some Degree, the Mismanagement of their publick Business: For Habits of Business, and Ability in it, are acquired only by Practice; and, where universal Dissipation and the perpetual Pursuit of Amusement are the Mode, the Youths

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who are educated in it can rarely afterwards acquire that patient Attention and close Application to Affairs, which are so necessary to a statesman charg'd with the Care of national Welfare. Hence their frequent Errors in Policy, and hence the Weariness at Publick Councils, and the Backwardness in going to them, the constant Unwillingness to engage in any Measure that requires Thought and Consideration, and the readiness for postponing every new Proposition; which postponing is therefore the only Part of Business that they come to be expert in, an Expertness produced necessarily by so much daily Practice. Whereas, in America, men bred to close Employment in their private Affairs attend with habitual Ease to those of the publick when engag'd in them, and nothing fails through Negligence.

3. *With regard to Frugality in Expences;* the Manner of Living in America is in general more simple and less Expensive than in England. Plain Tables, plain Clothing, plain Furniture in Houses, few Carriages of Pleasure. In America an expensive Appearance hurts Credit, and is therefore avoided; in England it is often put on with a View of gaining Credit, and continued to Ruin. In *publick* Affairs, the Difference is still greater. In England Salaries of Officers and Emoluments of office are Enormous. The King has a Million Sterling per Annum, and yet cannot maintain his Family free of Debt; Secretaries of State, Lords of the Treasury, Admiralty, &c., have vast Appointments; an Auditor of the Exchequer has sixpence in the Pound, or a Fortieth Part, of all the public Money expended by the Nation, so that, when a War costs 40,000,000 there is a Million for him: an Inspector of the Mint, in the last new Coinage, received

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as his Fees £65,000 Sterling a Year; to which Rewards no Service these Gentlemen can render the Public is by any means equivalent. This is all paid by the People, who are oppress'd by the Taxes so occasioned, and thereby rendered less able to contribute to the Payment of necessary national Debts. In America, Salaries, where indispensable, are extreamly low; but much of publick Business is done gratis. The Honour of serving the Publick ably and faithfully is deemed sufficient. *Public Spirit* really exists there, and has great Effects. In England it is universally deemed a NonEntity, and whoever pretends to it is laugh'd at as a fool, or suspected as a Knave. The Committees of Congress, which form the Board of War, the Board of Treasury, the Naval Board, the Committee for Accounts, the Board of Foreign Transactions for procuring Arms, Ammunition, Clothing etc., all attend the Business of their respective Functions without any Salary or Emolument whatever, tho' they spend in it much more of their Time, than any Lord of Treasury or Admiralty in England can afford from his Amusements. A late British Minister computed, that the whole Expence of the Americans in their *civil* Government, of 3,000,000 People, amounted to but £70,000 sterling per Annum, and drew from thence a Conclusion, that they ought to be taxed, 'till their Expence equalled in proportion to what it cost Britain to govern Eight Millions. He had no idea of a contrary Conclusion, that, if 3,000,000 may be well governed for £70,000, Eight Millions may be as well governed for 3 times that Sum, and therefore the Expence of his own Government should be diminished. In that corrupted Nation, no Man is ashamed of being concern'd in lucrative *Government Jobs*, in which the public money is Egregiously

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misapplied and squandered, the Treasury pillaged, and more numerous and heavier Taxes are called for, to the great Oppression of the People. While the Prospect of a greater Number of these Jobbs to be occasion'd by a War is an Inducement with many to cry out for War on all Occasions, and to oppose every Proposition of Peace. Hence the constant Increase of the national Debt; and the absolute Improbability of its ever being discharged.

4. *With regard to the Solidity of Funds;* the *whole* thirteen States of America are engag'd for the Payment of every Debt contracted by the Congress, and the Debt to be contracted by the present War is the *only* Debt they will have to pay; all, or nearly all, the former Debts of particular Colonies being already discharged. Whereas England will have to pay, not only the enormous Debt this War must occasion, but all their vast preceding Debt, or the Interest of it; and, while America is enriching itself by Prizes made upon the British Commerce, more than it ever did by any Commerce of its own, under the Restraints of a British Monopoly, Britain is growing poorer by the loss of that Monopoly, the diminution of its revenues, and of course less able to discharge the present indiscreet Encrease of its Expences.

5. *With regard to Prospects of greater future Ability*, Britain has none such. Her islands are circumscrib'd by the Ocean. Excepting a few Parks or Forests, she has no new Land to cultivate, and cannot therefore extend her Improvements. Her Numbers of People, too, instead of increasing from increas'd Subsistence, are continually diminishing from growing Luxury, and the greater Difficulty of maintaining Families, which of course discourages early Marriages. Thus she will have fewer People to assist in paying her Debts, and that

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diminish'd Number will be poorer. America, on the contrary, has, besides her Lands already cultivated, a vast Territory yet to improve; The Lands cultivated continually increase in Value with the Encrease of People; and the people, who double themselves by a *natural Propagation* in 25 Years, will double yet faster by the Accession of *Strangers*, as long as Lands are to be had for new Families; so that every 20 Years there will be a double Number of Inhabitants oblig'd to discharge publick Debts; and those Inhabitants, being more opulent, may pay their Shares with greater Ease.

6. *With Regard to Prudence in General Affairs, and the Advantages they expect from the Loan desired.* The Americans are Cultivators of Land; those engag'd in Fishery and Commerce are a small Number, compar'd with the Body of the People. They have ever conducted their several Governments with Wisdom, avoiding Wars and vain, expensive Projects, delighting only in their peaceable Occupations, which must, considering the Extent of their yet uncultivated Territory, find them Employment still for Ages. Whereas England, ever unquiet, ambitious, avaricious, imprudent, and quarrelsome, is half her Time engag'd in some War, or other, always at an expence infinitely greater than the advantages proposed if it could be obtained. Thus the War against Spain in 1739, for a Claim of Debt of about £95,000, (scarce a Groat for the nation), and spent £40,000,000 Sterling in the War, and 50,000 Men; and made Peace without obtaining satisfaction. Indeed, there is scarce a Nation in Europe, against which she has not made War on some frivolous Pretext or other, and by this means has imprudently accumulated a Debt, that has brought her on the Verge of bankrupcy. But the most indiscrete of all her Wars is the

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present against America, with whom she might for ages have preserv'd her profitable connection by only a just and equitable Conduct. She is now acting like a mad Shop-keeper, who should attempt, by beating those that pass his Door, to make them come in and be his Customers. America cannot submit to such Treatment, without being first ruined, and, being ruined, her Custom will be worth nothing. England, to bring this to pass, is increasing her Debt, and ruining herself effectually. America, on the other Hand, aims only at establishing her Liberty, and that Freedom of Commerce which will be advantageous to all Europe; while the Abolishing of the Monopoly which she has hitherto labour'd under, will be an Advantage sufficiently ample to repay the Debt, she may contract to accomplish it.

7. *With regard to character in the honest payment of debts*, the Punctuality of America in Discharge of *Public Debts* is shown under the first head: The general character of the People in that respect appears from their faithful Payment of *private Debts* to England, since the Commencement of the War. There were not indeed wanting some half politicians who propos'd *stopping that Payment*, until Peace should be restor'd, alledging, that in the usual Course of Commerce, and of the Credit given, there was always a Debt existing equal to the Trade of 18 months; that, the Trade amounting to 5 Millions Sterling per Annum, the Debt must be Seven Millions and a Half; That this Sum paid to the British Merchants would operate to prevent the Distress, intended to be brought on Britain by our stoppage of Commerce with her: For the Merchants, receiving this Money, and no Orders with it for further Supplies, would either lay it out in the Funds, or in employing Manufacturers to accumulate Goods

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for a future hungry Market in America upon an expected Accommodation, by which Means the Funds would be kept up and the Manufacturers prevented from Murmuring. But *it was alledged*, that Injuries from Ministers should not be reveng'd on Merchants who were our Friends; that the Credit was in consequence of private Contracts made in confidence of good Faith; that these ought to be held sacred and faithfully comply'd with; for that, whatever publick Utility might be suppos'd to arise from a Breach of private Faith, it was unjust, and would in the End be found unwise, *Honesty* being in truth the *best Policy*. On this Principle the Proposition was universally rejected: And tho' the English prosecuted the War with unexampled Barbarity, burning our defenceless Towns in the midst of Winter, and arming Savages against us, the Debt was punctually paid, and the Merchants of London have testify'd to the Parliament, and will testify to all the World, that from their Experience in dealing with us they had, before the War, no Apprehensions of our Unfairness, and that, since the War, they have been convinced that their good Opinion of us was well founded. England, on the contrary, an old, corrupt, extravagant and profligate Nation, sees herself deep in Debt, which she is in no condition to pay, and yet is madly and dishonestly running deeper, despairing ever to satisfy her Creditors and having no prospect of discharging her Debts but by a publick Bankrupcy.

On the whole it appears, that, from the general Industry, Frugality, Ability, Prudence, and Virtue of America, she is a much safer Debtor than Britain: To say nothing of the Satisfaction generous Minds must have in reflecting, that by Loans to America they are opposing Tyranny, and aiding the Cause of Liberty, which is the Cause of all Mankind.

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816. TO THE COMMITTEE OF SECRET CORRESPONDENCE[1] (D. S. W.)

Paris, January 4, 1777.

GENTLEMEN,

I arrived here about two weeks since, where I found Mr. Deane. Mr. Lee has since joined us from London. We have had an audience of the minister, Count de Vergennes, and were respectfully received. We left for his consideration a sketch of the proposed treaty.[2] We are to wait upon him to-morrow with a strong memorial, requesting the aids mentioned in our instructions. By his advice, we have had an interview with the Spanish ambassador, Count d'Aranda,[3] who seems well disposed towards us, and will forward copies of our memorials to his court, which will act, he says, in perfect concert with this.

Their fleets are said to be in fine order, manned and fit for sea. The cry of this nation is for us, but the court, it is thought, views an approaching war with reluctance. The press continues in England. As soon as we can receive a positive answer from these courts, we shall despatch an express with it. I am, gentlemen, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

[1] The Committee of Secret Correspondence was appointed by Congress to correspond with the friends of the colonies in Great Britain and elsewhere. The first members chosen (November 29, 1775) were Harrison, Franklin, Johnson, Dickinson, and Jay. At the time of the writing of this letter the members were B. Harrison, R. H. Lee, J. Witherspoon, and W. Hooper. — ED.

[2] See this sketch in the "Secret Journals of Congress," Vol. II, p. 7. — ED.

[3] Don Pedro Pablo Abarca y Bolea, Conde d'Aranda (1718–1799), Spanish ambassador in France (1773–1784). He sympathized cordially with the French people and enjoyed their favor and esteem. He played an important part in the conclusion of the treaty of Paris, and in the following year received at Madrid the title of "conseiller d'Etat." — ED.

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817. TO MRS. MARY HEWSON[1] (P. C.)

Paris, Jan. 12, 1777.

MY DEAR, DEAR POLLY,

Figure to yourself an old Man, with grey Hair Appearing under a Martin Fur Cap, among the Powder'd Heads of Paris. It is this odd Figure that salutes you, with handfuls of Blessings on you and your dear little ones.

On my Arrival here, Mlle. Biheron[2] gave me great Pleasure in the Perusal of a Letter from you to her. It acquainted me that you and yours were well in August last. I have with me here my young Grandson, Benja. Franklin Bache, a special good Boy. I give him a little French Language and Address, and then send him over to pay his Respects to Miss Hewson. My Love to all that love you, particularly to dear Polly. I am ever, my dear Friend, your affectionate

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. Temple,[3] who attends me here, presents his Respects. I must contrive to get you to America. I want all my Friends out of that wicked Country. I have just seen in the Papers 7 Paragraphs about me, of which 6 were Lies.

[1] From the original in the possession of T. Hewson Bradford, M.D. — ED.

[2] Mademoiselle Biheron (1730?–1815), a Parisian artist who made extraordinarily accurate anatomical reproductions in wax. She studied human anatomy with enthusiasm, dissecting the corpses of soldiers. Her excellent imitations of the human form in wax were exhibited in Paris on Wednesdays (admission three livres). The collection finally became the property of Catherine II. She was a friend of Dr. Dubourg, and in that way Franklin became acquainted with her. — ED.

[3] William Temple Franklin. — ED.

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818. TO JULIANA RITCHIE[1] (A. P. S.)

Paris, Jan. 19, 1777.

MADAM, I am much oblig'd to you for your kind Attention to my Welfare in the Information you give me. I have no doubt of its being well founded. But as it is impossible to discover in every case the Falsity of pretended Friends who would know our Affairs; and more so to prevent being watch'd by Spies, when interested People may think proper to place them for that Purpose; I have long observ'd one Rule which prevents any Inconvenience from such Practices. It is simply this, to be concern'd in no Affairs that I should blush to have made publick, and to do nothing but what Spies may see & welcome. When a Man's Actions are just & honourable, the more they are known, the more his Reputation is increas'd & establish'd. If I was sure therefore that my Valet de Place was a Spy, as probably he is, I think I should not discharge him for that, if in other Respects I lik'd him. The various Conjectures you mention concerning my Business here must have their Course. They amuse those that make them, & some of those that hear them; they do me no harm, and therefore it is not necessary that I should take the least Pains to rectify them. I am glad to learn that you are in a Situation that is agreable to you, and that Mr. Ritchie was lately well.

[1] Wife of William Ritchie, a merchant of Philadelphia. She had lived for some years in England, but from 1775 to the time of writing this letter she resided at Cambray with five young ladies of fortune ("daughters to my particular friends in England"), who were all under her care. Her letter to Franklin, dated January 12, 1777 (A. P. S.), warned him that he was surrounded by spies. — ED.

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My daughter and her Children were so when I left them, but I have lost my dear Mrs. Franklin now two Years since. I have the Honour to be, very respectfully, Madam,

Your most obedient humble Serv[t]

B. F.

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819. TO JOHN HANCOCK[1] (D. S. W.)

Paris, January 20, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

The bearer, Captain Balm,[2] is strongly recommended to me as a very able officer of horse, and capable of being extremely useful to us, in forming a body of men for that service. As he has otherwise an excellent character, I take the liberty of recommending him to my friends as a stranger of merit, worthy of their civilities, and to the Congress as an officer, who, if employed, may greatly serve a cause, which he has sincerely at heart. With great respect, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

[1] John Hancock was at this time President of Congress. This letter was printed by Jared Sparks, "The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution," Boston, 1829. — ED.

[2] Martin de la Balme was brevetted as lieutenant-colonel of cavalry (May 26, 1777), was made inspector of cavalry (July 18, 1777), and resigned October 12, 1777. He was formerly subadjutant of the gendarmerie (light-horse). He applied to M. Lenoir for a passport to go to Philadelphia, and showed to him this letter and similar ones to other members of Congress. Lenoir referred the request to Count de Vergennes, who replied (January 29, 1777): "The Government not being able to acknowledge those who wish to go and try their fortune in that part of America, absolutely cannot do what would prove undeniably that it was aware of their projects. I can only thank you, Sir, for having refused M. la Balme's request, and I beg you to be good enough to persevere in your refusal in the case of any other request of the same kind." — ED.

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820. TO THOMAS MORRIS[1] (D. S. W.)

Paris, January 26, 1777.

SIR,

We have expected some Remittances from you to our credit, in consequence of the Sales which have been made at Nantes. You must be sensible how very unbecoming it is of the Situation we are in, to be dependent on the credit of others. We therefore desire that you will remit with all possible Expedition the Sum allotted by the Congress for our expenses.

[B. FRANKLIN, for the Commissioners]

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821. TO M. MONTAUDOUIN[2] (L. C.)

Paris, Jan^{y} 26th, 1777.

SIR: — We are very much obliged to you for the information contained in yours of the 21st.

Mr. Williams' good sense will prevent him from being

[1] Thomas Morris was United States commercial agent at Nantes. He was a brother of Robert Morris, and was appointed through his influence. His career and his life were soon ended by his surrender to intemperance, but not before he was the cause, by reason of his conduct and his negligence, of much trouble and distress to Franklin and the other commissioners. George Lupton wrote to William Eden that he "has turned out the greatest drunkard the world ever produced" (August 20, 1777).

The letter in L. C. is an auto. draft by Lee, with a note "to Mr. T. Morris" by Franklin. — ED.

[2] The Montaudouin Brothers were a firm of Nantes merchants, who were associated with Jonathan Williams and John D. Schweighauser in the sale of prizes. M. Montaudouin (the elder) was a gentleman of culture, acquainted with men of science, and gifted with some facility in the making of verse. He was a cousin german of Mme. Duboccage, the poetess whom Voltaire

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materially embarrassed by any manœuvre employed to make him counteract our instructions.

We cannot so entirely comprehend this obligation we have to the mayor and alderman of your city, as to know in what terms to return it. As it is probable one of our number will soon be in Nantes,[1] he will be able to thank him in person. In the meantime we beg the favour of you, sir, to make them our acknowledgments in such manner as you may think becoming. We have the honour to be, with very great esteem, sir, Your most obedient servants.

[THE COMMISSIONERS]

crowned with laurel. In the letter (December 21, 1776) to which this one is a reply, Montaudouin invited Franklin to dinner at Nantes, expressed very fully the sentiment that Franklin inspired in France, and included these verses of his own making: —

"PORTRAIT DE M. LE DOCTEUR BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

" Ce sage nous a fait connoître
Les effets merveilleux d'un feu subtil et prompt
Venant de la nature, et son âme peut-être.
Plus d'un laurier couvre son front
Il a fait à Philadelphie
Un temple à la philosophie,
Un thrône pour la liberté,
De l'Europe bientôt bannie;
Dans les deux mondes respecté
Il est par son heureux génie
Ses mœurs douces, sa bonhomie,
Son ton et sa simplicité,
Surtout pour sa philanthropie,
L'honneur de l'amérique, et de l'humanité." (A. P. S.)

— ED.

[1] Arthur Lee arrived in Nantes, February 11, 1777. He wrote to Franklin (February 13), "I have thanked the Mayor, who is a very honest man." — ED.

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822. TO MRS. MARY HEWSON[1] (P. C.)

Paris, Jan. 26, 1777.

DEAR POLLEY,

I wrote a few Lines to you by Dr. B[ancroft], and have since seen your Letter to Jona. by which I have the great Pleasure of learning, that you and yours were well on the 17th.

What has become of my and your dear Dolly?[2] Have you parted? for you mention nothing of her. I know your Friendship continues; but perhaps she is with one of her Brothers. How do they all do?

I have not yet receiv'd a Line from my dear old Friend, your Mother. Pray tell me where she is, and how it is with her. Jonathan, who is now at Nantes, told me that she had a Lodging in Northumberland Court. I doubt her being comfortably accommodated there. Is Miss Barwell a little more at rest, or as busy as ever? Is she well? And how fares it with our good Friends of the Henckel Family?

But, principally, I want to know how it is with you. I hear you have not quite settled yet with those people. I hope, however, that you have a sufficient Income, and live at your Ease, and that your Money is safe out of the Funds. Does my Godson remember any thing of his Doctor Papa?[3] I suppose not. Kiss the dear little Fellow for me; [not ?] forgetting

[1] From the original in the possession of T. Hewson Bradford, M.D. — ED.

[2] Dorothea Blount. — ED.

[3] An allusion to a letter from Mrs. Hewson (September 3, 1776), in which she told Franklin, "We drank your health to-day; the person who first proposed the toast was my son William who took up his glass of wine and water (for he is still very sober) & said 'My Doctor Papa's health!' He came up to me this moment whispering, 'Give my love to Dr. Papa.'" — ED.

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the others. I long to see them and you. What became of the Lottery Ticket I left with your good Mother, which was to produce the Diamond Earings for you? Did you get them? If not, Fortune has wrong'd you, for you *ought* to have had them. I am, my dear Friend, ever yours with sincere Esteem and Affection,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. 27th Jan^{y}. They tell me, that, in writing to a Lady from Paris, one should always say something about the Fashions. Temple observes them more than I do. He took Notice, that at the Ball in Nantes, there were no Heads less than 5 and a few were 7 Lengths of the Face, above the Top of the Forehead. You know that those who have practis'd Drawing, as he has, attend more to Proportions, than People in common do. Yesterday we din'd at the Duke de Rochefoucault's, where there were three Dutchesses and a countess, and no Head higher than a Face and a half. So, it seems, the farther from Court, the more extravagant the Mode.

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823. INSTRUCTIONS TO CAPTAIN SAMUEL NICHOLSON (L. C.)

Paris, January 26, 1777.

SIR: — You are directed to proceed to Boulogne, and there purchase, on as good terms as possible, a cutter suitable for the purpose of being sent to America. The purchase being made, despatch the vessel to Havre de Grace to the care of Mons. Limozin, and agree in the bargain to have her delivered at said port, at the risk and expense of the original

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owner, at which stipulate to make the payment. Should you miss of one at Boulogne, proceed to Calais and pursue the same directions. If you fail there, pass to Dover, or Deal, and employ a person there to make the purchase as for Mr. Limozin of Nantes, at whose house the payment shall be made. Your skill in maritime affairs will enable you to judge of the vessel proper for our purpose, in which we wish you to embark yourself for Havre and on your arrival put the vessel into the care of Mr. Limozin, to be filled with every thing necessary for her to proceed the designed voyage, at the same time directing Mr. Limozin to call her and speak of her as his own, — after which you will instantly set off for this place, to inform us of your proceedings. Meantime you are, on purchasing, to write, first post, not to us but to Mr. Le Grand, Banq: rue Mons Mart, vis-à-vis S^{t} Joseph, à Paris, only saying in a few words that you have made a purchase, and shall draw on him soon for the money favour of Mr. Limozin, or words to that purpose. This letter will be shown us, and we shall regulate our proceedings accordingly.

Should you be obliged on purchasing, to pay at Dover or Deal, Mons. Le Grand's letter will give a sufficient credit for that purpose and at Calais or Boulogne you will address yourself, on the score of advice and assistance in money matters, to the persons to whom you will have letters directed, but on no other account, and avoid hinting your proceedings or views to any one. But should Capt. Hynsen arrive from London and you, let him go in the vessel you purchase to Havre and there wait our further orders. Should he arrive and no vessel be purchased, in such case procure him a passage to Havre and direct him to apply to Mr. Limozin

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for our directions. In the whole, we have to wish you to make the utmost despatch and to conduct with the utmost secrecy and the economy consistent with hastening as fast as possible the object in view.

[BENJAMIN FRANKLIN]

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824. TO JOSEPH PRIESTLEY (L. C.)

Paris, Jan. 27, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

I received your very kind Letter of Feb^{y} last,[1] some time in September. Major Carleton,[2] who was so kind as to forward it to me, had not an Opportunity of doing it sooner. I rejoice to hear of your continual Progress in those useful Discoveries; I find that you have set all the Philosophers of Europe at Work upon Fix'd Air; and it is with great Pleasure I observe how high you stand in their Opinion; for I enjoy my Friends' fame as my own.

The Hint you gave me jocularly, that you did not quite despair of the Philosopher's Stone, draws from me a Request, that, when you have found it, you will take care to lose it again; for I believe in my conscience, that Mankind are wicked enough to continue slaughtering one another as long as they can find Money to pay the Butchers. But, of all the Wars in my time, this on the part of England appears to me the wickedest; having no Cause but Malice against Liberty, and the Jealousy of Commerce. And I think the

[1] Priestley's letter was dated February 13, 1776, and was printed by Sparks, Vol. VIII, p. 171; and in *The Pennsylvania Magazine*, Vol. 27, p. 169. — ED.

[2] Brother of Guy Carleton, first Lord Dorchester, governor of Quebec. — ED.

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Crime seems likely to meet with its proper Punishment; a total loss of her own Liberty, and the Destruction of her own Commerce.

I suppose you would like to know something of the state of Affairs in America. In all Probability we shall be much stronger the next campaign than we were in the last; better arm'd, better disciplin'd, and with more Ammunition. When I was at the camp before Boston,[1] the Army had not 5 Rounds of Powder a Man. This was kept a Secret even from our People. The World wonder'd that we so seldom fir'd a Cannon; we could not afford it; but we now make Powder in Plenty.

To me it seems, as it has always done, that this War must end in our favour, and in the Ruin of Britain, if she does not speedily put an end to it. An English Gentleman here the other day, in Company with some French, remarked, that it was folly in France not to make War immediately; *And in England*, reply'd one of them, *not to make Peace.*

Do not believe the reports you hear of our internal Divisions. We are, I believe, as much united as any People ever were, and as firmly.

B. FRANKLIN.

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825. RESOLUTIONS OF THE COMMISSIONERS IN PARIS (U. OF P.)

Paris, Febr 2d 1777.

IT is considered that in the present situation of things at the Courts of France and Spain, we find no probability of

[1] In October, 1775.

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obtaining any effectual aid, alliance or declaration of war against Great Britain, without the following stipulation; therefore

We the Commissioners plenepotentiary from the Congress of the United States of America, are unanimously of Opinion, that if France or Spain should conclude a Treaty of Amity and Commerce with our States, and enter into a war with Great Britain in consequence of that, or of open aid given to our States; it will be right and proper for us, or in absence of the others, for any one of us, to stipulate and agree that the United States, shall not separately conclude a Peace, nor aid Great Britain against France or Spain, nor intermit their best exertions against Great Britain during the continuance of such War. Provided always that France & Spain, do on their part enter into a similar stipulation, with our States.

B. FRANKLIN
SILAS DEANE
ARTHUR LEE

Paris, Feb^{y} 5th 1777.

It is farther consider'd, that in the present peril of the liberties of our Country, it is our duty to hazard every thing in their support & defence.

Therefore Resolvd unanimously —

That if it should be necessary, for the attainment of any thing, in our best judgment, material to the defence & support of the public cause; that we shou'd pledge our persons, or hazard the censure of the Congress by exceeding our Instructions — we will, for such purpose most chearfully risque our personal liberty or life.

B. FRANKLIN
SILAS DEANE
ARTHUR LEE

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826. TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS[1] (P. C.)

Paris, Feb. 5, 1777.

DEAR COUSIN

I receiv'd several Letters from you last Night which I put into Mr. Dean's Hands who answers them. I forwarded yours to London for Mr. Blount some time since. Since you are likely to stay at Nantes for some time longer I enclose some Letters receiv'd here for you. I think Connection with Mr. S.[2] might be advantageous to you both in the way of Business. Besides he is rich and has handsome Daughters. I know not whether you can get one of them. I only know you may deserve her.[3]

Mr. Lee in his way to the South of France will call at Nantes. He sets out to-morrow or next Day and will take our Dispatches for America.

I am ever, your affectionate Uncle

B. FRANKLIN

[1] From the original in the possession of Mr. Louis A. Biddle. — ED.

[2] John D. Schweighauser, a Nantes merchant, was United States agent for the sale of prizes in Brittany, and United States commercial agent at Nantes. — ED.

[3] Jonathan Williams married, September 12, 1779, Mariamne Alexander, daughter of William Alexander, of Edinburgh, a connection of Lord Stirling. Williams was a son of Grace Williams (*née* Harris) and a grandnephew of Franklin. He was born in Boston, May 26, 1750. President Adams appointed him (February 16, 1801) a major in the Second Regiment of Artillerists and Engineers. He assumed command (December 15, 1801) of the embryo military school, which preceded the Military Academy of West Point, of which he was the first superintendent. — ED.

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827. TO LORD GEORGE GERMAIN[1] (L. C.)

Paris, Feb^{y} 7th, 1777.

WHEREAS the snow *Dickenson* with her cargoe, which was the property of the Congress of the United States of America, was by an act of Piracy in some of her crew carried into the port of Bristol in England, and there as we are informed, was converted to the use of the government of Great Britain, and the perpetrators of so base and dishonest an action, the mate, etc., were rewarded instead of being punished for their wickedness, — and whereas another vessel with her Cargoe of Tobacco, being also the property of the United States, or of some inhabitants of the same, was lately carried into the port of Liverpool, in England, by a similar act of treachery in her crew; and a third has in the same manner been carried into Halifax;

We therefore being commissioners plenipotentiary from the Congress of the United States of America do, in their name and by their authority, demand from the court of Great Britain, a restitution of those vessels and their cargoes, or the full value of them; together with the delivery of the pirates into our hands, to be sent where they may be tried and punish'd as their crimes deserve.

We feel it our duty to humanity to warn the court of Great

[1] Viscount Sackville (1716–1785), known from 1720 to 1770 as Lord George Sackville, and from 1770 to 1782 as Lord George Germain, was appointed by Lord North in 1775 a lord commissioner of trade and plantations, and likewise Secretary of State for the colonies. Franklin addressed him as "one of the principal Secretaries of State to the King of Great Britain." This letter is endorsed (L. C.), "not sent." — ED.

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Britain of the consequences of protecting such offenders and of encouraging such actions as are in violation of all moral obligations and therefore subversive of the firmest foundation of the laws of nations.

It is hop'd that the Government of Great Britain will not add to the unjust principles of this war, such practices as would disgrace the meanest state in Europe; and which must forever stain the character of the British nation. We are sensible that nothing can be more abhorrent from the sentiments and feelings of the Congress of the United States, than the authorizing so base a kind of war as a retaliation of these practices will produce. We are, therefore more earnest in pressing the court of Great Britain to prevent by the act of justice which is demanded, the retaliation, to which necessity, in repugnance to principles, will otherwise compel.

B. FRANKLIN
SILAS DEANE
ARTHUR LEE.

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828. TO MRS. THOMPSON [AT LILLE] (L. C.)

Paris, February 8, 1777

YOU are too early, *Hussy*, (as well as too saucy,) in calling me *Rebel;* you should wait for the Event, which will determine whether it is a *Rebellion* or only a *Revolution*. Here the Ladies are more civil; they call us *les Insurgens*, a Character that usually pleases them: And methinks all other Women who smart, or have smarted, under the Tyranny of a bad Husband, ought to be fixed in *Revolution* Principles, and act accordingly.

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In my way to Canada last Spring, I saw dear Mrs. Barrow at New York. Mr. Barrow had been from her two or three Months to keep Gov. Tryon and other Tories Company on board the Asia, one of the King's Ships which lay in the Harbour; and in all that time [that] naughty Man had not ventur'd once on shore to see her. Our Troops were then pouring into the Town, and she was packing up to leave it, fearing, as she had a large House, they would incommode her by quartering Officers in it. As she appeared in great Perplexity, scarce knowing where to go, I persuaded her to stay; and I went to the general Officers then commanding there, and recommended her to their Protection; which they promis'd and perform'd. On my Return from Canada, (where I was a Piece of a Governor and I think a very good one for a Fortnight, and might have been so till this time if your wicked Army, Enemies to all good Government, had not come and driven me out,) I found her still in quiet Possession of her House. I inquired how our People had behav'd to her. She spoke in high terms of the respectful Attention they had paid her, and the Quiet and Security they had procur'd her. I said I was glad of it; and that, if they had us'd her ill, I would have turn'd Tory. Then says she, with that pleasing Gayety so natural to her, *I wish they had.* For you must know she is a *Toryess* as well as you, and can as flippantly call *Rebel.* I drank Tea with her; we talk'd affectionately of you and our other friends the Wilkeses, of whom she had received no late Intelligence. What became of her since, I have not heard. The Street she then lived in was some months after chiefly burnt down; but, as the Town was then, and ever since has been, in Possession of the King's Troops, I have had no Opportunity of knowing whether she

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suffered any Loss in the Conflagration. I hope she did not, as, if she did, I should wish I had not persuaded her to stay there.

I am glad to learn from you, that that unhappy, tho' deserving Family, the W——s, are getting into some Business, that may afford them Subsistence. I pray, that God will bless them, and that they may see happier Days. Mr. Cheap's and Dr. H——'s good fortunes please me. Pray learn, if you have not already learnt, like me, to be pleased with other People's Pleasures, and happy with their Happinesses, when none occur of your own; and then perhaps you will not so soon be weary of the Place you chance to be in, and so fond of Rambling to get rid of your *Ennui*. I fancy you have hit upon the right Reason of your being Weary of St. Omer's, viz. that you are out of Temper, which is the effect of full Living and Idleness. A Month in Bridewell, beating Hemp, upon Bread and Water, would give you Health and Spirits, and subsequent Cheerfulness and Contentment with every other Situation. I prescribe that Regimen for you, my dear, in pure good will, without a Fee. And let me tell you, if you do not get into Temper, neither Brussels nor Lisle will suit you. I know nothing of the Price of Living in either of those Places; but I am sure a single Woman, as you are, might with Œconomy upon two hundred Pounds a year maintain herself comfortably anywhere, and me into the Bargain. Do not invite me in earnest, however, to come and live with you; for, being posted here, I ought not to comply, and I am not sure I should be able to refuse.

Present my Respects to Mrs. Payne and Mrs. Heathcot; for, tho' I have not the Honour of knowing them, yet, as you say they are friends to the American Cause, I am sure they

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must be Women of good Understanding. I know you wish you could see me; but, as you can't, I will describe myself to you. Figure me in your mind as jolly as formerly, and as strong and hearty, only a few years older; very plainly dress'd, wearing my thin gray strait hair, that peeps out under my only *Coiffure*, a fine Fur Cap, which comes down my Forehead almost to my Spectacles. Think how this must appear among the Powder'd Heads of Paris! I wish every gentleman and Lady in France would only be so obliging as to follow my Fashion, comb their own Heads as I do mine, dismiss their *Friseurs*, and pay me half the Money they paid to them. You see, the gentry might well afford this, and I could then enlist those *Friseurs*, who are at least 100,000, and with the Money I would maintain them, make a Visit with them to England, and dress the Heads of your Ministers and Privy Counsellors; which I conceive to be at present *un peu dérangées*. Adieu, Madcap; and believe me ever, your affectionate Friend and humble Servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. Don't be proud of this long Letter. A fit of the Gout, which has confined me five Days, and made me refuse to see Company, has given me a little time to trifle; otherwise it would have been very short, Visitors and Business would have interrupted; and perhaps, with Mrs. Barrow, you wish they had.

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829. THE SALE OF THE HESSIANS

FROM THE COUNT DE SCHAUMBERGH TO THE BARON HOHENDORF, COMMANDING THE HESSIAN TROOPS IN AMERICA.[1]

Rome, February 18, 1777.

MONSIEUR LE BARON: — On my return from Naples, I received at Rome your letter of the 27th December of last year. I have learned with unspeakable pleasure the courage our troops exhibited at Trenton, and you cannot imagine my joy on being told that of the 1,950 Hessians engaged in the fight, but 345 escaped. There were just 1,605 men killed, and I cannot sufficiently commend your prudence in sending an exact list of the dead to my minister in London. This precaution was the more necessary, as the report sent to the English ministry does not give but 1,455 dead. This would make 483,450 florins instead of 643,500 which I am entitled to demand under our convention. You will comprehend the prejudice which such an error would work in my finances, and I do not doubt you will take the necessary pains to prove that Lord North's list is false and yours correct.

The court of London objects that there were a hundred wounded who ought not to be included in the list, nor paid for as dead; but I trust you will not overlook my instructions

[1] For the authorship of this literary burlesque, see Tyler, "Literary History of the American Revolution," Vol. II, pp. 367–380; and Rosengarten, "American History from German Archives," 1904, pp. 26–28. It appears in the "Correspondance, Sécrète et inédite" (see Vol. I, p. 60), but with no allusion to Franklin. The time and place of its first publication are still unknown, but it is almost certainly from Franklin's pen. — ED.

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to you on quitting Cassel, and that you will not have tried by human succor to recall the life of the unfortunates whose days could not be lengthened but by the loss of a leg or an arm. That would be making them a pernicious present, and I am sure they would rather die than live in a condition no longer fit for my service. I do not mean by this that you should assassinate them; we should be humane, my dear Baron, but you may insinuate to the surgeons with entire propriety that a crippled man is a reproach to their profession, and that there is no wiser course than to let every one of them die when he ceases to be fit to fight.

I am about to send to you some new recruits. Don't economize them. Remember glory before all things. Glory is true wealth. There is nothing degrades the soldier like the love of money. He must care only for honour and reputation, but this reputation must be acquired in the midst of dangers. A battle gained without costing the conqueror any blood is an inglorious success, while the conquered cover themselves with glory by perishing with their arms in their hands. Do you remember that of the 300 Lacedæmonians who defended the defile of Thermopylæ, not one returned? How happy should I be could I say the same of my brave Hessians!

It is true that their king, Leonidas, perished with them: but things have changed, and it is no longer the custom for princes of the empire to go and fight in America for a cause with which they have no concern. And besides, to whom should they pay the thirty guineas per man if I did not stay in Europe to receive them? Then, it is necessary also that I be ready to send recruits to replace the men you lose. For this purpose I must return to Hesse. It is true, grown men

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are becoming scarce there, but I will send you boys. Besides, the scarcer the commodity the higher the price. I am assured that the women and little girls have begun to till our lands, and they get on not badly. You did right to send back to Europe that Dr. Crumerus who was so successful in curing dysentery. Don't bother with a man who is subject to looseness of the bowels. That disease makes bad soldiers. One coward will do more mischief in an engagement than ten brave men will do good. Better that they burst in their barracks than fly in a battle, and tarnish the glory of our arms. Besides, you know that they pay me as killed for all who die from disease, and I don't get a farthing for runaways. My trip to Italy, which has cost me enormously, makes it desirable that there should be a great mortality among them. You will therefore promise promotion to all who expose themselves; you will exhort them to seek glory in the midst of dangers; you will say to Major Maundorff that I am not at all content with his saving the 345 men who escaped the massacre of Trenton. Through the whole campaign he has not had ten men killed in consequence of his orders. Finally, let it be your principal object to prolong the war and avoid a decisive engagement on either side, for I have made arrangements for a grand Italian opera, and I do not wish to be obliged to give it up. Meantime I pray God, my dear Baron de Hohendorf, to have you in his holy and gracious keeping.

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830. TO RICHARD PETERS[1] (P. R. O.)

March 6, 1777.

DEAR SIR: — The Bearer, Mr. Garanger, Captain of Bombardiers, had, as he informs me, engaged to go to America with M. de Coudray, an officer of great Distinction in the Artillery, who is engaged in our Service, and sailed some time since. M. Garanger not being then ready was left behind. He is well recommended to me by M. Brisson,[2] a Gentleman of Science here, and has other Certificates of his Abilities to shew; besides that, the Judgment of M. de Coudray, in chusing to engage him, is of itself more than a sufficient Recommendation. I know nothing of the Contract between them, and must for that refer to M. de Coudray himself, who I hope is by this time safely arrived. I only beg leave to introduce him to you, to recommend him to your Civilities and Countenance, as a Gentleman who is zealous for our Cause and desirous to serve it, and to request you will present him to the Board of War. I Congratulate you on the Check given to the Enemy in New Jersey, and wishing continued Success to our Arms, and to you, and Mrs. Peters Health, and Happiness, I have the honour to be, Dear Sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

[1] Richard Peters (1744–1828), an eminent jurist of Philadelphia, was elected by Congress (June 13, 1776) secretary of the Continental board of war, and later was also a commissioner of war. — ED.

[2] Mathurin-Jacques Brisson (1723–1806), naturalist and physicist; successor to Abbé Nollet in the chair of physics at the College of Navarre. His "Histoire de l'Electricité" was translated by Dr. Priestley. Captain Garanger had seen twenty-one years' service in the artillery. His brother was a lieutenant in the same service. Franklin's acquaintance with them began January 24, 1777. — ED.

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831. TO ARTHUR LEE[1] (L. C.)

Passy, March 21, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

We have received your Favours from Vitoria and from Burgos. The Congress, sitting at Baltimore, dispatch'd a Packet to us the 9th of January, containing Accounts of the Success at Trenton, and subsequent Events to that Date, as far as they had come to knowledge. The Vessel was oblig'd to run up a little River in Virginia to avoid some Men-of-War, and was detain'd there 17 Days, or we should have had these Advices sooner. We learn however thro' England, where they have News from N. York to the 4th of February, that in Lord Cornwallis's retreat to Brunswick two Regiments of his Rear Guard were cut to pieces; that G. Washington having got round him to Newark and Eliz. Town, he

[1] In a letter from the Commissioners to the Committee of Secret Correspondence, dated at Paris, February 6th, they write as follows: "Finding that our residence here together is nearly as expensive as if separate, and *having reason to believe*, that one of us might be useful in Madrid, and another in Holland, and some courts further northward, we have agreed that Mr. Lee go to Spain, and either Mr. Deane or Dr. Franklin to the Hague. Mr. Lee sets out to-morrow, having obtained passports, and a letter from the Spanish ambassador here to the minister there. The journey to Holland will not take place so soon. The particular purposes of these journeys we cannot prudently now explain."

Mr. Lee was not permitted by the Spanish court to proceed any farther than Burgos. He was there met by the Marquis de Grimaldi, one of the ministers, and succeeded in obtaining from the Spanish government a small amount of money for purchasing military supplies, which were subsequently shipped to the United States from Bilboa. William Alexander wrote to Franklin (May 24, 1777), "I see you have made my old friend Lee a minister at Madrid, I think he has very much the manners of a Spaniard when he is not angry." — ED.

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had retir'd to Amboy in his Way to New York; that Gen. Howe had called in the Garrisons of Fort Lee and Fort Constitution, which were now possess'd by our People; that, on the York side, Forts Washington and Independence were retaken by our Troops, and that the British Forces at Rhode Island were recalled for the Defence of New York.

The Committee in their Letters mention the Intention of Congress to send Ministers to the Courts of Vienna, Tuscany, Holland, and Prussia. They also send us a fresh Commission, containing your Name instead of Mr. Jefferson's, with this additional Clause, "and also to enter into, and agree upon a Treaty with His Most Christian Majesty, or such other Person or Persons as shall be by him authorized for that purpose, for assistance in carrying on the present War between Gr. Br. and these United States." The same Clause is in a particular Commission they have sent me, to treat with the Court of Spain, similar to our Common Commission to the Court of France;[1] and I am accordingly directed to go to Spain; but, as I know that Choice was made merely on the Supposition of my being a little known there to the great Personage[2] for whom you have my Letter, (a Circumstance of little Importance,) and I am really unable thro' Age to bear the Fatigue and Incommodities of such a Journey, I must excuse myself to Congress, and join with Mr. Deane in requesting you to proceed in the Business on the former Footing, till you can

[1] On the 1st of January, 1777, Congress resolved: "That Benjamin Franklin be directed to proceed to the court of Spain, and there transact, in behalf of the United States, such business as shall be intrusted to him by Congress, agreeably to the instructions, that may be given to him, and transmitted by the Committee of Secret Correspondence." See his Commission in the *Secret Journal of Congress*, Vol. II, p. 42. — ED.

[2] Don Gabriel de Bourbon. — ED.

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receive a particular Commission from Congress, which will no doubt be sent as soon as the Circumstances are known.

We know of no Plans or Instructions transmitted to Mr. Deane but those you have with you. By this Packet, indeed, we have some fresh Instructions, which relate to your mission, viz. that, in case France and Spain will enter into the War, the United States will assist the former in the Conquest of the British Sugar Islands, and the latter in the Conquest of Portugal, promising the Assistance of 6 Fregates mann'd, of not less than 24 Guns each, and Provisions equal to 2,000,000 dollars; America desiring only for her Share, what Britain holds on the Continent; but you shall by the first safe Opportunity have the Instructions at length. I believe we must send a Courier.

We are ordered to borrow if we can, £2,000,000 on interest. Judge then what a Piece of Service you will do, if you can obtain a considerable Subsidy, or even a Loan without Interest.

We are also ordered to build 6 Ships of War. It is a Pleasure to find the things ordered, which we were doing without Orders.

We are also to acquaint the several Courts with the Determination of America to maintain at all Events our Independance. You will see, by the Date of the Resolution relating to Portugal, as well as by the above, that the Congress were stout in the midst of their Difficulties. It would be well to sound the Court of Spain on the Subject of permitting our arm'd Ships to bring Prizes into her Ports, and there dispose of them. If it can not be done openly, in what manner we can be accommodated with the Use of their Ports, or under what Restric-

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tions? This Government has of late been a little nice on that head; and the Orders to L'Orient have occasioned Captain Wickes some Trouble.

We have good Advice from our Friend of Amster^dm^, that, in the Height of British Pride on their Summer Success, and just before they heard of any Check, the ambassador, Sir Joseph York,[1] had been ordered to present a haughty Memorial to the States, importing that, notwithstanding their Promises to restrain their Subjects from supplying the Rebels, it was notorious, that those Supplies were openly furnish'd by Hollanders at St. Eustatia; and that the Governor of that Island had return'd, *from his Fort, the Salute of a Rebel Ship of War with an equal Number of Guns;* that the King justly and highly resented these Proceedings, and demanded that the States should by more severe Provisions restrain that Commerce; that they should declare their disapprobation of the insolent Behaviour of their Governor, and punish him by an immediate Recall; otherwise his Majesty, who knew what appertained to the Dignity of his Crown, would take proper Measures to vindicate it: And he required an immediate answer. The States coolly return'd the Memorial, with only this Observation, that, when the Respect due to Sovereigns was not preserved in a Memorial, an Answer to it ought not to be expected. But the City of Amsterdam took fire at the Insolence of it, and have instructed their Deputies in the States to demand Satisfaction by the British Court's Disavowal of the Memorial, and a Reprimand of the Ambassador. The States immediately demanded a Number of Men-of-War ships to be put in Commission. Perhaps since

[1] Sir Joseph Yorke, Baron Dover (1724–1792), was British minister at the Hague from 1751 to 1780. — ED.

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the bad News is come, England may be civil enough to make up this little Difference.[1]

Mr. Deane is still here. You desire our Advice about your stopping at Burgos. We agree in Opinion, that you should comply with the Request. While we are asking Aids, it is necessary to gratify the desires, and in some Sort comply with the Humours, of those we apply to. Our business now is to carry our Point. But I have never yet chang'd the Opinion I gave in Congress, that a Virgin State should preserve the Virgin Character, and not go about suitoring for Alliances, but wait with decent Dignity for the Applications of others. I was overrul'd; perhaps for the best.

With the greatest Esteem, I am ever, dear Sir, your most obedient humble Servant,

B. FRANKLIN

[1] Benjamin Sowden wrote to Franklin from Rotterdam, June 7, 1777 (A. P. S.): "It was at my Desire that Mr. Arrenberg [publisher of *Gasetteer Français de Leide*] sent you in his last, a French piece entitled *Avis aux Hessois* [Mirabeau — ED.] which was much approved, and has had a surprising run in this country. It is generally supposed to be the production of a French gentleman in the Hague, where in reality it was printed, and not at *Cleves* as is asserted on the title-page. He added of his own accord, Sir Joseph Yorke's menacing, or rather bullying, Memorial to the States, which gave them such offense that had it not been Proved he received it ready drawn up from England, they were determined to have informed him that he might leave this country as soon as he pleased. It is generally said and believed here, to have been composed by the King himself, and indeed the indeterminate expression *presque a la Portée du Canon* shows it to be the production of a Person unskilled in that precision with which things of this nature ought always to be penned." — ED.

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832. MODEL OF A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION (L. C.)

Paris, April 2, 1777.

SIR: — The bearer of this, who is going to America, presses me to give him a Letter of Recommendation, tho' I know nothing of him, not even his Name. This may seem extraordinary, but I assure you it is not uncommon here. Sometimes, indeed one unknown Person brings another equally unknown, to recommend him; and sometimes they recommend one another! As to this Gentleman, I must refer you to himself for his Character and Merits, with which he is certainly better acquainted than I can possibly be. I recommend him however to those Civilities, which every Stranger, of whom one knows no Harm, has a Right to; and I request you will do him all the good Offices, and show him all the Favour that, on further Acquaintance, you shall find him to deserve. I have the Honour to be, etc. [B. F.]

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833. TO LORD STORMONT[1] (P. C.)

Paris, April 2, 1777.

MY LORD

We did ourselves the Honour of writing some time since to your Lordship on the Subject of Exchanging Prisoners.

[1] From the private collection of Mr. D. McN. Stauffer. A copy of this letter was immediately sent by Lord Stormont to Lord Weymouth, with the following note (P. R. O.): —

"Thursday morning, April 3d 1777

"MY LORD,

"I send your Lordship a Copy of a very Extraordinary, and Insolent Letter, that has just been left at my House, by a Person who called himself an

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You did not condescend to give us any Answer, and therefore we expect none to this. We however take the Liberty of sending you Copies of certain Depositions which we shall transmit to Congress whereby it will be known to your Court that the United States are not unacquainted with the barbarous Treatment their People receive when they have the Misfortune of being your Prisoners here in Europe. And that if your Conduct towards us is not altered it is not unlikely that severe Reprisals may be thought justifiable from the Necessity of putting some Check to such abominable Practices. For the sake of Humanity it is to be wish'd that Men would endeavour to alleviate as much as possible the unavoidable Misseries attending a State of War. It has been said that among the civilized Nations of Europe the ancient Horrors of that State are much diminished. But the Compelling Men by Chains, Stripes & Famine to fight against their Friends and Relations, is a new Mode of Barbarity which your Nation alone has the Honour of inventing. And the sending American Prisoners of War to Africa and Asia remote from all Probability of Exchange and where they can scarce hope ever to hear from their Families even if the Unwholesomeness of the Climate does not put a speedy End to their Lives, is a manner of treating Captives that you can justify

English Gentleman; I thought it by no means Proper to appear to have received, and kept such a Letter, and therefore, My Lord, instantly sent it Back, by a Savoyard, seemingly unopened, under Cover to M^r^ Carmichal who I discovered to be the Person that had brought the Letter, I added the following short unsigned Note. 'The Kings Ambassador receives no Letters from Rebels but when they come to implore His Majestys Mercy.'

"I am with the greatest Truth and Respect, etc.

"STORMONT."

An auto. draft of Franklin's letter is in L. C. indorsed by Franklin, "return'd with Insult." — ED.

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by no Precedent or Custom except that of the black Savages of Guinea.

We are Your Lordships most obed^{t} Humble Servants

BENJ^{a} FRANKLIN.

SILAS DEANE.

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834. TO M. LITH (L. C.)

Passy near Paris April 6, 1777.

SIR,

I have just been honoured with a Letter from you, dated the 26th past, in which you express yourself as astonished, and appear to be angry, that you have no Answer to a Letter you wrote me of the 11th of December, which you are sure was delivered to me.

In exculpation of myself, I assure you that I never receiv'd any Letter from you of that date. And indeed, being then but 4 days landed at Nantes, I think you could scarce have heard so soon of my being in Europe.

But I received one from you of the 8th of January, which I own I did not answer. It may displease you, if I give you the Reason; but, as it may be of use to you in your future Correspondences, I will hazard that for a Gentleman to whom I feel myself oblig'd, as an American, on acc^{t} of his good Will to our Cause.

Whoever writes to a Stranger should observe 3 Points. 1. That what he proposes be practicable. 2. His Propositions should be made in explicit Terms, so as to be easily understood. 3. What he desires should be in itself reasonable. Hereby he will give a favourable Impression of his Understanding, and create a Desire of further Acquaintance. Now

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it happened that you were negligent in *all* these Points; for, first, you desired to have Means procur'd for you of taking a Voyage to America "*avec sureté*"; which is not possible, as the Dangers of the Sea subsist always, and at present there is the additional Danger of being taken by the English. Then you desire that this may be "*sans trop grandes Dépenses*," which is not intelligible enough to be answer'd, because, not knowing your Ability of bearing Expences, one cannot judge what may be *trop grandes*. Lastly, you desire Letters of Address to the Congress and to General Washington; which it is not reasonable to ask of one who knows no more of you, than that your Name is Lith, and that you live at Bayreuth.

In your last you also express yourself in vague Terms, when you desire to be inform'd whether you may expect "*d'être reçu, d'une manière convenable*" in our Troops. As it is impossible to know what your Ideas are of the *manière convenable*, how can one answer this? And then you demand, whether I will support you by my Authority in giving you Letters of Recommendation. I doubt not your being a Man of Merit; and, knowing it yourself, you may forget that it is not known to everybody; but reflect a Moment, Sir, and you will be convinced, that, if I were to practise giving Letters of Recommendation to Persons of whose Character I knew no more than I do of yours, my Recommendations would soon be of no Authority at all.

I thank you, however, for your kind Desire of being Serviceable to my Countrymen; and I wish in return, that I could be of Service to you in the scheme you have formed of going to America. But Numbers of experienced Officers here have offer'd to go over and join our Army, and I could give them no Encouragement, because I have no Orders

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for that purpose, and I know it extremely difficult to place them when they come there. I cannot but think, therefore, that it is best for you not to make so long, so expensive, and so hazardous a Voyage, but to take the Advice of your Friends, and "*stay in Franconia.*" I have the honour to be, Sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

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835. TO CONDE D'ARANDA[1] (L. C.)

Passy, April 7, 1777.

SIR,

I left in your Excellency's Hands, to be communicated, if you please, to your Court, a Duplicate of the Commission from Congress, appointing me to go to Spain as their Minister Plenipotentiary. But, as I understand that the Receiving such a Minister is not at present thought convenient, and I am sure the Congress would have nothing done that might incommode in the least a Court they so much respect, I shall therefore postpone that Journey till Circumstances may make it more suitable. In the mean time, I beg leave to lay before his Catholic Majesty, through the Hands of your Excell^{y}, the Propositions contain'd in a Resolution of Congress, dated Dec. 30, 1776, viz.

"That, if His Catholic Majesty will join with the United States in a War against Great Britain, they will assist in reducing to the Possession of Spain the Town and Harbour of Pensacola; provided the Inhabitants of the United States shall have the free Navigation of the Mississippi, and the Use of the Harbour of Pensacola; and will, (provided it shall be true, that his Portuguese Majesty has insultingly expelled the

[1] Spanish ambassador to the court of France. See page 191. — ED.

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Vessels of these States from his Ports, or has confiscated any such Vessels,) declare War against the said King, if that Measure shall be agreable to, and supported by, the Courts of France and Spain."

It is understood, that the strictest union subsists between those two courts; and, in case Spain and France should think fit to attempt the Conquest of the English Sugar Islands, the Congress have further propos'd to furnish Provisions to the Amount of two Millions of Dollars, and to join their Fleet, with 6 frigates of not less than twenty-four guns each, manned and fitted for service; and to render any other Assistance which may be in their Power, as becomes good Allies; without desiring for themselves the possession of any of the said Islands.

These propositions are subject to Discussion, and to receive such Modification as may be found proper. With great respect, I have the honour to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

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836. TO C. RYBOT (L. C.)

Passy, April 9, 1777.

SIR: — I believe it is very unusual for one Man to pay another's Debts without being desired so to do by the Debtor or knowing that he acknowledges the Sum demanded to be due. Mr. Hood is as much a Stranger to me as he is to you. You have lent him 3 Guineas; I have lent him 30, supposing him an honest Man. By the account you give me of his Treatment of you, and which I do not doubt, he appears to be otherwise; and from the Falshoods he told you and wrote to

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you, there is reason to question the Truth of what he has said of his Estate and Ability to pay. These are certainly no Inducements to me to advance more on his Account. The Letters he brought for me were of small Consequence, and the Packets contain'd only Newspapers. The benefit therefrom which you suppose I receiv'd by your helping him on to Paris, is vastly less than the Damage I shall suffer by his coming thither, if I am not paid; and I imagine that if a Man intrusted with carrying Letters to you should obtain a Credit by showing them, you would hardly think yourself oblig'd to pay his Debts. In the Memorandum you left with me you have not given your Address in London. Send me that, if you please.

I shall take the same Care and Pains to recover your Money as my own, and when recovered shall faithfully remit it to you. This seems to me all that you can fairly desire of, sir, your most obedient humble Servant[1]

B. FRANKLIN

[1] This letter was an answer to one of the previous day from Mr. Rybot to the following effect: "I did not imagine you would have hesitated to pay me the trifling sum I disbursed for Mr. Wood, as had I not assisted him he must (as himself declared) have staid at Calais till you had, w^ch^ besides the expence might have been detrimental to your concerns by y^e^ delay; 'tis true I have no immediate call upon you, but as a man of known integrity, I am persuaded you would not have me to be a sufferer by an act, from w^ch^ you reaped the benefit" (A. P. S.). — ED.

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837. TO RICHARD BACHE[1]

Passy near Paris, April 14, 1777.

DEAR SON: — The bearer, Mr. Guez,[2] being well recommended to me as a skilful surgeon, and otherwise of good character for his morals and prudence, I recommend him to your civilities and advice, which as a stranger he may have occasion for; and as he has not sufficient to pay his passage here, and will not be able to provide such a sum immediately there I desire you to advance it for him out of my money left in your hands, and take his bond for repayment in a year. I request likewise that you will endeavor to introduce him to some employment either in the army or navy; or if those are full, into some town or place where one of his profession may be wanted. Ben and Temple continue well, with your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN.

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838. TO THE BISHOP OF TRICOMIA[3] (L. C.)

Passy, April 22 1777.

REV[D] SIR: — Mr. Mercley, whom your Reverence mentions as having made Promises to Monsieur, your Brother,

[1] Printed from John Bigelow, "The Complete Works of Benjamin Franklin," Vol. VI, p. 89. — ED.

[2] M. Guez was a young Swiss, son of a famous surgeon at Montpellier and Lausanne. This letter to Bache was written upon the very day that M. Guez called upon Franklin with a letter of recommendation from Court de Gebelin, who had at that moment completed the fourth volume of "Monde primitif." — ED.

[3] Tricomia is an extinct see in the Holy Land, near Jerusalem. — ED.

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was employ'd as a Merchant to purchase some military Stores for the Congress, but I know of no Authority that he had to engage Officers of the Marine, or to make any Promises to such in our Behalf. I have not myself (as I have already had the Honour of telling your Reverence) the least Authority from the Congress to make Promises to Officers to encourage their going to America; and since my Arrival in France I have constantly dissuaded all who have applied to me, from undertaking the Voyage, as I know how difficult it would be for them to find Employment, a few Engineers and Officers of the Artillery excepted, who are gone. Nevertheless if your Brother continues resolv'd to go thither at his own Expence and the Risque of finding or not finding Employment, which I cannot advise him to do, I will give him Letters of Introduction to Gentlemen there, recommending him to their Civilities; but I must at the same time caution him against having any Reliance on those Letters as a means of procuring him a Command in our Armies, since I am by no means sure they will have any such Effect. I will, if you please, give him a Letter to Gen. Washington; but then I should have the State of his services to enclose; and if accompanied with Recommendations from some General Officers of Note, it will be so much the better.

My Door is never shut to your Reverence when I am at home, as I am almost every Evening. With great Respect I have the Honour to be, your Reverence's most obedient and most humble Serv^{t}, B. F.

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839. TO VISCOUNT DE PONTÉ DE LIMA [1] (L. C.)

Paris, April 26. 1777

SIR: — The Congress of the United States of America have seen a Paper purporting to be an Edict of his Portuguese Majesty, dated at the Palace of Ajudo the 4th of July, 1776, in which the said States are treated with Contumely, their Ships however distressed, forbidden to enter any Port in his Dominions, and his Subjects everywhere forbidden to afford them the least Shelter or Relief. But as this Instrument has not been communicated to the Congress with any Circumstance of Authenticity, and appears only in Gazettes which frequently contain fictitious Pieces not to be rely'd on; as a long Friendship and Commerce has subsisted between the Portuguese and the Inhabitants of North America, whereby Portugal has been supplied with the most necessary Commodities in Exchange for her Superfluities, and not the least Injury has ever been committed or even offered by America to that Kingdom, the United States can scarcely bring themselves to believe that the said Edict is genuine, and that Portugal, which, but little more than a Century since, was with respect to its former government in a Situation similar to theirs, should be the first to reproach them with it as a Crime that render'd them unworthy of the common Rights of Hu-

[1] Minister for the affairs of the kingdom of Portugal. Another draft of this document in L. C. is indorsed by Franklin, "Rough of the Memorial to Portugal sent by M. Castrioto." Mr. Bigelow printed both drafts (Vol. VI, pp. 91 and 93). As they are substantially the same, I have printed only the memorial as sent. Another copy in the hand of Temple Franklin, with an interlineation by Franklin, is in the Auckland Mss. at King's College, Cambridge. — ED.

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manity, and should be the only Power in Europe that has rejected their Commerce and assumed to judge of their Cause, and condemn them without Authority, Hearing or Enquiry. We, therefore, being Ministers of the Congress of the said United States, have been charged by them to represent to his most faithful Majesty their sincere desire to live in Peace with all Mankind, and particularly with his Nation; that if he has been by their Enemies surpris'd into the issuing such an Edict, he would be pleased in his Wisdom to reconsider and revoke it; and that he would henceforth permit the Continuance of the said Friendly and Commercial Intercourse between his People and theirs, which has ever been so advantageous to both. This Representation we now take the Liberty of making to your Court through the Medium of your Excellency; and whatever might have been its Reception if it had been made before the late Change, we do not now allow ourselves to doubt of its having in due time a favourable Answer, being persuaded from the equitable Character of the present Government that the Measure in question cannot be approved of, and such unworthy Treatment continu'd towards an inoffensive and Friendly People.

With great Respect, we have the Honour to be your Excellency's most obedient and most humble Servants,

B. FRANKLIN,
SILAS DEANE
ARTHUR LEE

Commissioners Plenipotentiary of the
United States of North America.

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840. TO JAN INGENHOUSZ[1] (L. C.)

[Paris, April 26, 1777.]

—— I LONG laboured in England, with great zeal and sincerity, to prevent the breach that has happened, and which is now so wide, that no endeavours of mine can possibly heal it. You know the treatment I met with from that imprudent

[1] This letter has been variously treated by Franklin's editors. It has been published as two different letters, and it has been conjectured that it was addressed to Dr. Joseph Priestley. The date assigned to it by Mr. Bigelow and repeated in the "List of the Benjamin Franklin Papers" (L. C.) is 1778.

An examination of the Ingenhousz letters in A. P. S. has shown that the letter was addressed to Dr. Ingenhousz, and that it was written April 26, 1777.

Ingenhousz wrote to Franklin November 15, 1776, lamenting the scene "of horror and bloodshed" of which America was the theatre. "What dismal scene of confusion, anarchy and bloodshed exhibits this once happy climate which did seem to be destined by the Author of Nature for the abode of tranquillity, the asilum for those who are persecuted for religious principles, and the only seat of undisturbed human felicity." From Franklin he declared he had learned to regard Great Britain and the colonies as one country, "having one common seat of government, which you thought should better remain where it always was, than to be transferred within the colonies. You told me more than once, that no more distinction should be made between a man residing in England and one residing in North America, than between the inhabitants of London and Sheffield — Knowing from your own mouth this to be your principle, I found myself often obliged to defend your conduct before the most Respectable Persons, who were very willing to adscribe (*sic*) in a great measure to you this unhappy contest and all the bloodshed of which it has been already and may be still the cause — will this dreadful storm at last subside and end in a calm, as human affairs commonly do? Or will it end in a total subversion of things? Will all the industrious labour of your ancestors employed in changing those wildernesses in the happyest abode for civilized men, at once been rendered useless, and their so newly erected cities converted again into inhabited deserts. I shudder at the very thoughts of such horrid catastrophes, of which no example has ever happened upon the surface of the earth." — ED.

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court; but I keep a separate account of private injuries, which I may forgive; and I do not think it right to mix them with public affairs. Indeed, there is no occasion for their aid to whet my resentment against a nation, that has burnt our defenceless towns in the midst of winter, has excited the savages to assassinate our innocent farmers, with their wives and children, and our slaves to murder their masters!

It would therefore be deceiving you, if I suffered you to remain in the supposition you have taken up, that I am come to Europe to make peace. I am in fact ordered hither by the Congress for a very different purpose; viz. to procure those aids from European powers, for enabling us to defend our freedom and independence, which it is certainly their interest to grant; as by that means the great and rapidly growing trade of America will be open to them all, and not a monopoly to Great Britain, as heretofore; a monopoly, that, if she is suffered again to possess, will be such an increase of her strength by sea, and if she can reduce us again to submission, she will have thereby so great an addition to her strength by land, as will, together, make her the most formidable power the world has yet seen; and, from her natural pride and insolence in prosperity, of all others the most intolerable.

You desire to know my Opinion of what will probably be the End of this War; and whether our new Establishments will not be thereby reduced again to Deserts. I do not, for my part, apprehend much danger of so great an Evil to us. I think we shall be able, with a little Help, to defend ourselves, our Possessions, and our Liberties so long that England will be ruined by persisting in the wicked attempt to destroy them. I must nevertheless regret that Ruin, and wish that her Injustice and Tyranny had not deserv'd

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it. And I sometimes flatter myself, that, old as I am, I may possibly live to see my Country settled in Peace and Prosperity, when Britain shall make no more a formidable Figure among the Powers of Europe.

You put me in mind of an Apology for my Conduct, which has been expected from me in Answer to the Abuses thrown upon me before the Privy Council.[1] It was partly written, but the Affairs of publick Importance I have ever since been engag'd in prevented my finishing it. The Injuries, too, that my Country has suffer'd, have absorb'd private Resentments, and made it appear trifling for an Individual to trouble the World with his particular justification, when all his Compatriots were stigmatized by the King and Parliament as being, in every respect, *the worst of Mankind!* I am oblig'd to you, however, for the friendly Part you have always taken in the Defence of my Character; and it is indeed no small Argument in my favour that those who have known me most and longest still love me and trust me with their most important Interests, of which my Election into the Congress by the Unanimous Voice of the Assembly, or Parliament of Pennsylvania, the day after my arrival from England, and my present Mission hither by the Congress itself, are Instances incontestable.

I thank you for the Account you give me of M. Volta's Experiment. You judge rightly in supposing, that I have not much time at present to consider philosophical Matters;[2]

[1] "You promised me to send me a copy of your Apology; but I have heard nothing about it since." Ingenhousz to Franklin, November 15, 1776. — Ed.

[2] "If I could expect that in the middel of the horrors of a civil war you reserved some hours to philosophical pursuites, I should entertain you with some experiments upon air and other matters, which I made some time ago

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but, as far as I understand it from your Description, it is only another form of the Leyden Phial, and explicable by the same Principles. I must, however, own myself puzzled by one part of your Account, viz. "and thus the electric Force once excited may be kept alive years together," which is perhaps only a Mistake. I have known it indeed to be continued many Months in a Phial hermetically sealed, and suppose it may be so preserved for Ages; but, though one may, by repeatedly touching the Knob of a charg'd Bottle with a small insulated Plate, like the upper one of the Electrophore, draw an incredible number of Sparks successively, that is, one after every touch, and those for a while not apparently different in magnitude, yet at length they will become small, and the Charge be finally exhausted. But I am in the wrong to give my Opinion till I have seen the Experiment.

I like much your Pasteboard Machine,[1] and think it may, in some respects, be preferable to the very large Glass ones constructed here. The Duc de Chaulnes[2] has one, said,

some of which I hear are to be publish'd in the philosophical trans. . . . . The new Electrical Machine called by the discoverer, one Mr. *Volta*, an Italian gentleman, Electrophorus perpetuus affords much matter of speculation. Some electricians thinking that the phenomena of this machine do not consist with your principles, have attempted to establish new ones; but I think them in the wrong. As the present troubles may possibly have prevented you getting some knowledge of this discovery, I think it my duty to give you a slight idea of its nature." [Here follows a description of the Voltaic battery.] Ingenhousz to Franklin, November 15, 1776. — ED.

[1] The "pasteboard machine" was thus referred to by Ingenhousz in his letter. "Some years ago I contrived a very strong electrical machine; it consisted of a disk of pasteboard four feet in diameter thoroughly dryed, then impregnated and covered with linseed oil varnish and whirled round vertically, and rubbed by hair skins in the way my flat machines are rubbed." — ED.

[2] Marie-Joseph d'Albert d'Ailly, duc de Chaulnes (1741–1793), abandoned a military career to devote himself to science. He followed with enthu-

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if I remember right, to be 5 feet in diameter. I saw it tried, but it happened not to be in order.

You inquire what is become of my Son, the Governor of New Jersey. As He adhered to the Party of the King, his People took him Prisoner, and sent him under a Guard into Connecticut, where he continues; but is allow'd a District of some Miles to ride about, upon his Parole of Honour not to quit that Country. I have with me here his Son, a Youth of about 17, whom I brought with me partly to finish his Education, having a great Affection for him, and partly to have his Assistance as a Secretary, in which Capacity he is very serviceable to me. I have also here with me my worthy Nephew, Mr. Williams, whom you ask after. The ingenious Mr. Canton, our other fellow-traveller, I suppose you know is now no more.[1]

As to the present State of our Affairs, w^ch^ you desire to be inform'd of, the English have long boasted much in their Gazettes of their Successes against us; but our latest Advices are that they have been repuls'd in their intended Invasion of Pennsylvania, and driven back thro' New Jersey to New York, with considerable Loss in three Engagements, so that the Campaign will probably end pretty much as it began, leaving them only in possession of the Islands which their naval Strength secures to them; and we shall in the next Campaign be much better provided with Arms and Ammuni-

siasm Franklin's investigations in electricity. F. presented to A. P. S. (June 20, 1788) a large drawing upon which he had written "Duc de Chaulnes's Improvement of Dr. Franklin's electrical Kite." — ED.

[1] "I should be very glad to know at the same time how your Nephew does, our fellow-traveller with Mr. Canton, and what is become of your son the governor of New Jersey." Ingenhousz to Franklin, November 15, 1776. — ED.

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tion for their entertainment; when our Force is to consist of 84 Battalions.

God bless you, my dear Friend, and believe me ever yours most affectionately, B. F.

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841. JAN INGENHOUSZ TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (A. P. S.)

Tissingen in Suabia
this 28 juin 1777

DEAR FRIEND

It seems all your letters miscarry in a certain Way. Your last favour of the 26 of April came only to my hands a few days ago after having passed thro Vienna and a great part of the German Empire. I am still at Tissingen in Suabia upon the estate of the Prince de *la Tour et Tassis*, whose two sons I have successfully inoculated. I intend to set out from here to morrow for Manheim were I will stay a few days; from there I will follow the Rhin to Cologne, and from there to Holland and be at Amsterdam about the 20th of July. towards the first of August I intend to set out for London, introduce a young Physician to the Medical faculty and to set out directly for Paris in purpose to find you there towards the middel of August. If you should have any commission to be fulfilled in London send only your letter to Amsterdam at my name putting upon the direction these words *Poste restante*. If what you would let Sir John or others know you could not communicate to me, you want only to enclose a letter to them, which will faithfully be delivered by me, tho I know commissions by words are Safer in the present circumstances, as they could search my pockets and find letters which they could suspect. But in this you will know better than I what precautions you ow to observe for not to hurt your friends. If I had not some private business to perform in Holland I would set out directly to Paris for to enjoye once more in this world the greatest satisfaction of seing the most respectful of all my friends. I was the more pleased to hear from yourself, that you will remain some months longer in France, and that I have the most flattering hope of finding you there in health and happiness.

Tho both your letters are far from fostering my wishes for to see peace restored between America and Great Brittain, I cant lay my hope aside as yet. The horrors of a civil war will at last make an impression in the mind of the leaders on both side. The noble and generous resistance of the Brave Americans will make England yield to their just pretensions of enjoying the same liberties and privileges with the mother country. If I had not the

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honour of knowing you, more than I do Mr Henkock, to be a prudent wise and moderate man, incapable of that enthusiastic phrensy, which overpowers rather than directs the exertion of our judgement, I should not be so decisive in my expectation. But I am happy to find even in your own lettres the greatest foundation of my hopes, because just all those injuries, brought upon America by England, of which you complain, as burning your defenceless cities in the winter, exciting Savages &c. are much posterior to the open resistance of America. These wounds are consequences of every warr and are allways buried in oblivion after the quarrel is settlet. However unwarrantable (and I am convinced they are) and imprudent may be the proceedings of the present ministry towards her Colonies, I can not think that both these respectable nations deserve such horrid disasters as have been allready the consequence of a dispute, which could be settled and can still be, if violence of the mind do not overpower the rational faculties of parties concerned. I am fully persuaded that you act accordingly to your best judgment for the good and dignity of your country, and that no privat resentment has any share in your proceedings. But I have not been able to persuade fully some very respectable persons, that you keep the ungenerous treatment, you recived so undeservedly from the ministry, quite upon a separate account from public affaires. My respectfull attachment to you make me wish, that your immortal name will go over to the latest posterity unsullied with the least suspicion of blame, but in the contrary crowned with the glory of having during the whole course of your live deserved highly from whole Mankind as one of the greatest philosophers, and having finish'd such a glorious carriere by settling your own country in peace and prosperity in reuniting the ties, so unhappily broken, between the two most respectable nations of the World, and blending them in one, the happyest for their laws and liberties and the most powerfull, which ever existed in the world. I could wish to have even the least share in bringing about such an honourable and happy reunion.

Somebody told me the Emperour is come to your own house. I know he wish'd to have a discours with you, and should be sorry some menagements for England had prevented him to instruct him self in the company of a philosopher. . . .

What ever may be the consequences of your unhappy warr, it will only excite in my mind a pity for both nations and perhaps for whole Mankind, if the flames of such a destructive warr should fly over to the rest of the world. I will be steadfast in conserving for you all the veneration I had before, and the most dutiful sense of gratitude I owe to you for your civilities and friendship towards me.

Give my best compliments to Mr Williams and your worthy nephew Franklin.

I am very respectfully
dear friend

Your most humble and
obedient servant and
affectionate friend
INGENHOUSZ

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842. TO THOMAS CUSHING[1] (D. S. W.) (L. C.)

Paris, May 1, 1777.

SIR,

I thank you for your kind Congratulations on my Arrival here, and shall be happy in finding that our Negotiations on this side the Water are of effectual Service to our Country.

The general News here is, that all Europe is arming and preparing for War, as if it were soon expected. Many of the Powers, however, have their Reasons for endeavouring to postpone it, at least a few Months longer.

Our Enemies will not be able to send against us all the Strength they intended; they can procure but few Germans; and their Recruiting and Impressing at home goes on but heavily. They threaten, however, and give out, that Lord Howe is to bombard Boston this summer, and Burgoyne, with the Troops from Canada, to destroy Providence, and lay waste Connecticut; while Howe marches against Philadelphia. They will do us undoubtedly as much Mischief as they can; but the Virtue and Bravery of our Countrymen will, with the Blessing of God, prevent part of what they intend, and nobly bear the rest. This Campaign is entered upon with a Mixture of Rage and Despair, as their whole Scheme of reducing us depends upon its Success; the wisest of the Nation being clear, that, if this fails, Administration will not be able to support another.

[We just now hear from Port L'Orient that a Privateer

[1] A draft of this letter is in L. C.; a trans. is in D. S. W. The part enclosed within brackets is stricken out of the draft in L. C., and was not included in the letter as sent. — ED.

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from Boston, the brig *Rising States*, Capt. Thomson,[1] has sent in a Prize there, laden with Fruit and Wine from Lisbon to London, being the third she has taken. And Mr. Greenwood, a Painter, formerly of Boston, who was here a few Days since, and returned to London, writes from Dover that he saw landed there eight Captains and their Mates, out of a Dutch homeward-bound Ship, which had been put on board her in the Channel by an American Privateer, who had taken their several Ships and burnt two of them. We do not know the Privateer's Name.]

With great respect, etc.

B. FRANKLIN.

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843. TO SAMUEL COOPER (L. C.)

Paris, May 1, 1777.

I THANK you for your kind Congratulations on my safe Arrival here, and for your good Wishes. I am, as you supposed, treated with great Civility and Respect by all Orders of People; but it gives me still greater Satisfaction to find, that our being here is of some Use to our Country. On that head I cannot be more explicit at present.

I rejoice with you in the happy Change of Affairs in America last Winter. I hope the same Train of Success will continue

[1] Probably Captain Thomas Thompson, a choleric commander whose criticism of politics and politicians at home and abroad lends sharpness and humour to Franklin's correspondence. He arrived in October, 1777, at Port Louis, without despatches and explained that he was tired of waiting upon a dilatory Congress: "We have obtained leave after various pretences, not consistent with the Honour of the U. S. nor the respect due to a Man of War belonging to a free and independent Empire — but small Folks must sing small and for the sake of convenience must abate their dignity." — ED.

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thro' the Summer. Our Enemies are disappointed in the Number of additional Troops they purposed to send over. What they have been able to muster will not probably recruit their Army to the State it was in the beginning of last Campaign; and ours I hope will be equally numerous, better arm'd, and better clothed, than they have been heretofore.

All Europe is on our Side of the Question, as far as Applause and good Wishes can carry them. Those who live under arbitrary Power do nevertheless approve of Liberty, and wish for it; they almost despair of recovering it in Europe; they read the Translations of our separate Colony Constitutions with Rapture; and there are such Numbers everywhere, who talk of Removing to America, with their Families and Fortunes, as soon as Peace and our Independence shall be established, that 'tis generally believed we shall have a prodigious Addition of Strength, Wealth, and Arts, from the Emigrations of Europe; and 'tis thought, that, to lessen or prevent such Emigrations, the Tyrannies established there must relax, and allow more Liberty to their People. Hence 'tis a Common Observation here, that our Cause is *the Cause of all Mankind*, and that we are fighting for their Liberty in defending our own. 'Tis a glorious task assign'd us by Providence; which has, I trust, given us Spirit and Virtue equal to it, and will at last crown it with Success. I am ever, my dear Friend, yours most affectionately,

B. F[RANKLIN].

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844. TO JOHN WINTHROP (L. C.)

Paris, May 1, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

I received your kind Letter of February 28,[1] which gave me great Pleasure. I forwarded your Letter to Dr. Price, who was well lately; but his Friends, on his acc^{t}, were under some Apprehensions from the Violence of Government, in consequence of his late excellent Publications in favour of Liberty. I wish all the Friends of Liberty and of Man would quit that Sink of Corruption, and leave it to its Fate.

The People of this Country are almost unanimously in our favour. The Government has its reasons for postponing a War, but is making daily the most diligent Preparations wherein Spain goes hand in hand. In the mean time, America has the whole Harvest of Prizes made upon the British Commerce; a kind of Monopoly that has its Advantages, as, by affording greater Encouragement to Cruisers, it increases the Number of our Seamen, and thereby augments our naval Power.

The Conduct of those Princes of Germany, who have sold the Blood of their People, has subjected them to the Contempt and Odium of all Europe. The Prince of Anspach, whose Recruits mutinied and refus'd to march, was obliged to disarm and fetter them, and drive them to the seaside by the help of his Guards; himself attending in Person. In his Return he was publicly hooted by Mobs thro' every Town he passed in Holland, with all sorts of reproachful Epithets. The

[1] The letter dated February 28 is in A. P. S. and is printed in Hale's "Franklin in France," Vol. I, p. 106. — ED.

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King of Prussia's Humour of obliging those Princes to pay him the same Toll per Head for the Men they drive thro' his Dominions, as used to be paid him for their *Cattle*, because they were sold as such, is generally spoken of with Approbation, as containing a just reproof of those Tyrants. I send you enclos'd one of the many Satires that have appeared on this occasion.[1]

With best Wishes of Prosperity to yourself and to my dear Country, where I hope to spend my last Years, and lay my Bones, I am ever, dear Sir, your affectionate Friend, and humble Servant.

B. FRANKLIN.

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845. TO GEORGE WASHINGTON[2]

Paris, June 13, 1777.

SIR,

The bearer, M. le Comte Kotkouski, a Polish officer, is recommended to me by several Persons of worth here, as a man of experience in military affairs, and of tried bravery. He has lost his family and estate in Poland, by fighting there in the cause of liberty, and wishes, by engaging in the same cause, to find a new country and new friends in America. Count Pulaski, who was a general of the confederates in Poland, and who is gone to join you, is esteemed one of the greatest officers in Europe. He can give you the character of this M. Kotkouski, who served under him as lieutenant-colonel.[3]

[1] Perhaps a reference to the satirical *jeu d'esprit* on p. 27. — ED.

[2] Printed by Jared Sparks, "The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution," Boston, 1829, Vol. III, p. 12. — ED.

[3] Count Kothkowski embarked on a Dutch vessel for Boston, with this letter of recommendation. He was taken prisoner and carried to Portsmouth, where he suffered much, and in December appealed to Franklin for help. — ED.

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It is with regret that I give letters of introduction to foreign officers, fearing that you may be troubled with more than you can provide for, or employ to their and your own satisfaction. When particular cases seem to have a claim to such letters, I hope you will excuse my taking the liberty. I give no expectations to those who apply for them; I promise nothing; I acquaint them, that their being placed when they arrive is a great uncertainty, and that, the voyage being long, expensive, and hazardous, I counsel them not to undertake it. This honest gentleman's zeal is not to be discouraged by such means; he determines to go and serve as a volunteer, if he cannot be employed immediately as an officer; but I wish and hope, that your Excellency may find a better situation for him, and that he will be a useful officer. He has the advantage of understanding English, and will soon speak it intelligibly. He also speaks German, and some other European languages, and the Latin. With the truest esteem and respect, I have the honour to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

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846. TO GEORGE WASHINGTON[1]

Paris, June 13, 1777.

SIR,

The person, who will have the honour of delivering this to your Excellency, is Monsieur le Baron de Frey, who is well recommended to me as an officer of experience and merit, with a request that I would give him a letter of introduction. I have acquainted him, that you are rather overstocked with

[1] Printed by Jared Sparks, "The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution," Boston, 1829, Vol. III, p. 13. — ED.

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officers, and that his obtaining employment in your army is an uncertainty; but his zeal for the American cause is too great for any discouragements I can lay before him, and he goes over at his own expense, to take his chance, which is a mark of attachment that merits our regard. He will show your Excellency the commissions and proofs of his military service hitherto, and I beg leave to recommend him to your notice. With the sincerest esteem and respect,

B. FRANKLIN.

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847. TO CAPTAIN HENRY JOHNSON[1]

(P. R. O. A. W. I.)

Passy, July 22, 1777.

SIR

The Bearer M. Le Chevr. de Kninon, who is desirous of going to America, is well recommended to me as a Person of Character and Merit. If he takes his Passage with you, I make no doubt that you will treat him with all the Civilities due to a Gentleman, in which you will very much oblige, Sir, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

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848. BERNARDIN DE SAINT PIERRE TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN[2] (A. P. S.)

MONSIEUR,

Un de mes frères cadets vient d'entrer au service de votre république et j'ai cru cette occasion favorable en vous demandant le service de lui faire

[1] Captain Johnson commanded the American brig privateer *Lexington*. She was captured off Ushant on the 19th of September, 1777, by Lieutenant Bazely of his Majesty's cutter *Alert*. Twelve original papers were found on board, and are now in P. R. O. A. W. I. — ED.

[2] This letter in A. P. S. is endorsed: "This is an autograph of the cele-

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passer une lettre (dont je vous prie de prendre lecture) de me procurer l'honneur de vous connaître personnellement. Il y a longtems, Monsieur, que je vous connoissais comme grand phisicien, comme grand orateur, et ce qui passe tous les talents parce qu'il exige toutes les vertus comme grand patriote. J'aurois pu aisement dans les relations que vous donnent vous travaux trouver ici des personnes de votre connaissance et de la mienne, mais j'aime les sciences et je frequente peu les sçavans car il me semble qu'il y a des choses à acquerir plus estimables que les lumières.

Si dans quelques uns de vos moments de loisir, vous vouliez bien m'en indiquer un pour une entrevue je tacherai de vous intéresser en faveur d'un frère qui est allé partager la gloire de votre cause et qui me paroit penetré pour vous des mêmes sentimens que moi.

Agrèez, Monsieur, les sentiments d'estime et de respect avec lesquels j'ai l'honneur d'être,

Votre très humble et très
obéissant serviteur
DE SAINT-PIERRE
ancien Cap^ne ingénieur du roy.

A l'hôtel de Bourbon rue de
la Magdelaine S^t Honoré.

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849. TO GEORGE WASHINGTON [1] (D. S. W.)

[August] 1777.

SIR: — The Marquis de Lafayette, a young nobleman of great expectations and exceedingly beloved here, is by this time probably with you. By some misapprehension in his contract with the merchants of Bordeaux he was prevented from using the produce of the cargo he carried over, and so

brated J. H. Bernardin de St. Pierre, author of 'Etudes de la Nature,' 'Paul et Virginie,' etc. The brother here mentioned was Dutailly de St. Pierre. He entered into the service of the Americans and after a variety of adventures some of which were of a disgraceful character he was sent a prisoner to France and locked up in the Bastille. Through the interference of Dr. Franklin he was restored to liberty. Soon after he lost his reason, and ended his days in a mad house." See Aimé Martin, "Memoir sur la vie et les Ouvrages de J. H. Bernardin de Saint Pierre," Paris, 1826, p. 273. — ED.

[1] The rough draft of this letter in D. S. W. is without date. — ED.

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was left without a supply of money. His friends here have sent him over about £500 sterling; and have proposed sending him more; but on reflection, knowing the extreme generosity of his disposition, and fearing that some of his necessitous and artful countrymen may impose on his goodness, they wish to put his money into the hands of some discreet friend, who may supply him from time to time, and by that means knowing his expenses, may take occasion to advise him, if necessary, with a friendly affection, and secure him from too much imposition. They accordingly have desired us to name such a person to them. We have not been able to think of one so capable, and so suitable from the influence of situation, to perform that kind office, as General Washington, under whose eye the gentleman will probably be. We beg therefore in his behalf, what his friends out of respect would not take the liberty of asking, that your Excellency would be pleased to furnish him with what money he may want in moderation, and take his drafts payable to us for the sums paid him, which we shall receive here and apply to the public service. We also join with his family in their earnest request that you would favour him with your counsels, which you may be assured will be an act of benevolence gratefully remembered and acknowledged, by a number of very worthy persons here who interest themselves extremely in the welfare of that amiable young nobleman.

With the greatest respect we have the honour to be, sir,

Your Excellency's, etc.

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850. TO GEORGE WASHINGTON (L. C.)

Passy Near Paris, September 4, 1777.

SIR: — The Gentleman who will have the Honour of waiting upon you with this Letter is the Baron de Steuben,[1] lately a Lieutenant-General in the king of Prussia's Service, whom he attended in all his Campaigns, being his Aide-de-Camp, Quartermaster General, etc. He goes to America with a true Zeal for our Cause, and a View of engaging in it and rendring it all the Service in his Power. He is recommended to us by two of the best Judges of military Merit in this Country, M. de Vergennes and M. de St. Germain, who have long been personally acquainted with him, and interest themselves in promoting his Voyage, from a full Persuasion that the Knowledge and Experience he has acquired by 20 Years' Study and Practice in the Prussian School may be of great Use in our Armies. I therefore cannot but wish that our Service may be made agreable to him.

I have the honour to be, etc.

B. F.

[1] Frederick William Augustus Henry Ferdinand von Steuben (Baron Steuben) was born in Magdeburg, Prussia, in 1730, and died in Steubenville, New York, in 1794. After a brilliant military career in Prussia, having served through the Seven Years' War, he entered the American army in September, 1777. Among the Franklin papers in A. P. S. are several pathetic letters of inquiry concerning Steuben written by his aged father in Germany. At the close of 1779 nothing had been heard of him since he left Prussia. His father, aged eighty-one, and his mother, aged seventy-three, hoped that Franklin would not refuse the petition of two aged persons. — ED.

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851. TO RICHARD PETERS[1]

Passy, September 12, 1777

SIR,

The bearer, M. Gérard, is recommended to me by M. Dubourg,[2] a gentleman of distinction here, and a hearty friend to our cause. I enclose his letter, that you may see the favourable manner in which he speaks of M. Gérard. I thereupon take the liberty of recommending the young gentleman to your civilities and advice, as he will be quite a stranger there, and to request that you would put him in the way of serving as a volunteer in our armies. I am, Sir,

B. FRANKLIN.

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852. TO ———?[3] (L. C.)

Passy, Oct. 4, 1777.

SIR,

I am much obliged by your communication of the letter from England. I am of your opinion, that it is not proper for publication here. Our friend's expressions concerning Mr. Wilson, will be thought too angry to be made use of by one philosopher when speaking of another, and on a philosophical question. He seems as much heated about this

[1] Printed by Jared Sparks, "The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution," Boston, 1829, Vol. III, p. 15. — ED.

[2] In a letter dated September 8, 1777. See "The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States," Wharton, Vol. II, p. 391. — ED.

[3] For the controversy in England respecting pointed and blunt lightning conductors, see Vol. I, pp. 106–108. See also the report on Lightning Conductors for the Powder Magazines at Purfleet, August 21, 1772. — ED.

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one point, as the Jansenists and Molinists were about the *five*. As to my writing any thing on the subject, which you seem to desire, I think it not necessary, especially as I have nothing to add to what I have already said upon it in a paper read to the committee, who ordered the conductors at Purfleet; which paper is printed in the last French edition of my writings.

I have never entered into any controversy in defence of my philosophical opinions; I leave them to take their chance in the world. If they are *right*, truth and experience will support them; if *wrong*, they ought to be refuted and rejected. Disputes are apt to sour one's temper, and disturb one's quiet. I have no private interest in the reception of my inventions by the world, having never made, nor proposed to make, the least profit by any of them. The King's changing his *pointed* conductors for *blunt* ones is, therefore, a matter of small importance to me. If I had a wish about it, it would be that he had rejected them altogether as ineffectual. For it is only since he thought himself and family safe from the thunder of Heaven, that he dared to use his own thunder in destroying his innocent subjects. I am, Sir, yours, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

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853. TO JAMES LOVELL[1] (M. H. S.)

Passy, Near Paris, Oct. 7, 1777

DEAR SIR

I receiv'd your Favour (without date) communicating a

[1] James Lovell (1737–1814) was a member of the Continental Congress from Massachusetts (1776–1782). He was a member of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, and diligently corresponded with the American commissioners and ministers in Europe. — ED.

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method of secret writing, for which I am obliged to you. I have since receiv'd yours of July 4.

I was very sensible before I left America of the inconveniencies attending the Employment of Foreign officers, and therefore immediately on my Arrival here I gave all the Discouragement in my Power to their going over; but Numbers had been previously engag'd by M^r^ Deane who could not refuse the Applications made to him. I was concern'd in sending the four Engineers, and in making the contract with them: but before they went, I had reason to dislike one of them, and to wish the agreement had not been made, for I foresaw the Discontent that Man was capable of producing among his companions, and I fancy that if instead of America they had gone to Heaven it would have been the same thing. You can have no conception of the Arts and Interest made use of to recommend and engage us to recommend very indifferent Persons. The importunity is boundless. The Numbers we refuse incredible: which if you knew you would applaud us for, and on that Account excuse the few we have been prevail'd on to introduce to you. But, as somebody says,

> "Poets lose half the Praise they would have got
> Were it but known what they discretely blot."

I wish we had an absolute order to give no Letter of Recommendation or even Introduction of the future to any foreign officer whatever.

As to the Instruction passed in Congress respecting French Officers who do not understand English we never made it known here, from the same apprehension that you express: all that understood a little English would have thought

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themselves intitled to a Commission, and the rest would have undertaken to learn it in the passage.

With great esteem, I am

Sir,

Your most obedient

humble Servant

B. FRANKLIN

P. S.

I enclose some Papers given me by the Baron Steuben, a Prussian officer who has gone over. Perhaps there may [be] useful Hints in them.

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854. TO THE MARQUIS DE CONDORCET[1]

(P. C.)

Passy, Oct. 12. 1777

DEAR SIR

I send you enclos'd the Letter you desire. But as I am apprehensive that the young Gentleman may have flattered himself with Expectations that are never likely to be answered in that Country, I wish he would consider it well before he undertakes such a Voyage. If he will take the Trouble of calling on me, perhaps I may afford him some useful Lights on the Subject.

I have not yet seen in the Vol. of 1773 what you mention.

I am glad to hear that Mad[e] la Duchesse d'Enville and the amiable Family are well. With the greatest Esteem and Respect, Je suis

Mon cher et illustre Confrere

Your most obedient

humble Servant

B. FRANKLIN

[1] From the original in the possession of Hon. Samuel W. Pennypacker. — ED.

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P. S. I have read with the highest Pleasure your excellent Eloge de M. l'Hopital. I knew you before as a great Mathematician: I now consider you as one of the first among the Politicians of Europe.

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855. TO DAVID HARTLEY[1] (D. S. W.)

Passy, Oct. 14, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

I received duly your letter of May 2, 1777, including a copy of one you had sent me the year before, which never came to hand, and which it seems has been the case with some I wrote to you from America. Filled tho' our letters have always been with sentiments of good will to both countries, and earnest desires of preventing their ruin and promoting their mutual felicity, I have been apprehensive, that, if it were known that a correspondence subsisted between us, it might be attended with inconvenience to you. I have therefore been backward in writing, not caring to trust the post, and not well knowing whom else to trust with my letters. But being now assured of a safe convey-

[1] This letter miscarried, and exists only in a copy in D. S. W. David Hartley (1732–1813) was the son of David Hartley, the philosopher, after whom Coleridge named his eldest child. He was a B.A. of Corpus Christi, Oxford, and a fellow of Merton College. He represented Hull in Parliament, 1774 to 1780 and from 1782 to 1784. His intimate friendship with Franklin and his attachment to Lord Rockingham caused him to be elected to act as plenipotentiary in Paris, where he helped to draw up the treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States. He eagerly sought to splinter the broken joint between Great Britain and the colonies, and deplored the folly and madness of the American war. Five large volumes of letters and other documents relating to the peace are now in the possession of Mrs. L. Z. Leiter, of Washington. — ED.

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ance, I venture to write to you, especially as I think the subject such an one as you may receive a letter upon without censure.

Happy should I have been, if the honest warnings I gave, of the fatal separation of interests, as well as of affections, that must attend the measures commenced while I was in England, had been attended to, and the horrid mischief of this abominable war been thereby prevented. I should still be happy in any successful endeavours for restoring peace, consistent with the liberties, the safety, and honour of America. As to our submitting to the government of Great Britain, it is vain to think of it. She has given us, by her numberless barbarities in the prosecution of the war, and in the treatment of prisoners, by her malice in bribing slaves to murder their masters, and savages to massacre the families of farmers, with her baseness in rewarding the unfaithfulness of servants, and debauching the virtue of honest seamen, intrusted with our property, so deep an impression of her depravity, that we never again can trust her in the management of our affairs and interests. It is now impossible to persuade our people, as I long endeavoured, that the war was merely ministerial, and that the nation bore still a good will to us. The infinite number of addresses printed in your gazettes, all approving this conduct of your government towards us, and encouraging our destruction by every possible means, the great majority in Parliament constantly manifesting the same sentiments, and the popular public rejoicings on occasion of any news of the slaughter of an innocent and virtuous people, fighting only in defence of their just rights; these, together with the recommendations of the same measures by even your cele-

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brated moralists and divines, in their writings and sermons, that are cited approved and applauded in your great national assemblies; all join in convincing us, that you are no longer the magnanimous and enlightened nation, we once esteemed you, and that you are unfit and unworthy to govern us, as not being able to govern your own passions.

But, as I have said, I should be nevertheless happy in seeing peace restored. For tho', if my friends and the friends of liberty and virtue, who still remain in England, could be drawn out of it, a continuance of this war to the ruin of the rest would give me less concern, I cannot, as that removal is impossible, but wish for peace for their sakes, as well as for the sake of humanity, and preventing further carnage.

This wish of mine, ineffective as it may be, induces me to mention to you, that, between nations long exasperated against each other in war, some act of generosity and kindness towards prisoners on one side has softened resentment, and abated animosity on the other, so as to bring on an accommodation. You in England, if you wish for peace, have at present the opportunity of trying this means, with regard to the prisoners now in your goals. They complain of very severe treatment. They are far from their friends and families, and winter is coming on, in which they must suffer extremely, if continued in their present situation; fed scantily on bad provisions, without warm lodging, clothes, or fire, and not suffered to invite or receive visits from their friends, or even from the humane and charitable of their enemies.

I can assure you, from my own certain knowledge, that your people, prisoners in America, have been treated with

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great kindness; they have been served with the same rations of wholesome provisions with our own troops, comfortable lodgings have been provided for them, and they have been allowed large bounds of villages in a healthy air, to walk and amuse themselves with on their parole. Where you have thought fit to employ contractors to supply your people, these contractors have been protected and aided in their operations. Some considerable act of kindness towards our people would take off the reproach of inhumanity in that respect from the nation, and leave it where it ought with more certainty to lay, on the conductors of your war in America. This I hint to you, out of some remaining good will to a nation I once sincerely loved. But, as things are, and in my present temper of mind, not being over fond of receiving obligations, I shall content myself with proposing, that your government would allow us to send or employ a commissary to take some care of those unfortunate people. Perhaps on your representations this might speedily be obtained in England, though it was refused most inhumanly at New York.

If you could have leisure to visit the goals in which they are confined, and should be desirous of knowing the truth relative to the treatment they receive, I wish you would take the trouble of distributing among the most necessitous according to their wants, two or three hundred pounds, for which your drafts on me here shall be punctually honour'd. You could then be able to speak with some certainty to the point in Parliament, and this might be attended with good effect.

If you cannot obtain for us permission to send a commissary, possibly you may find a trusty, humane, discreet

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person at Plymouth, and another at Portsmouth, who would undertake to communicate what relief we may be able to afford those unhappy, brave men, martyrs to the cause of liberty. [Your King will not reward you for taking this trouble, but God will.] I shall not mention the good will of America; you have what is better, the applause of your own good conscience. Our captains have set at liberty above 200 of your people, made prisoners by our armed vessels and brought into France, besides a great number dismissed at sea on your coasts, to whom vessels were given to carry them in: But you have not returned us a man in exchange. If we had sold your people to the Moors at Sallee, as you have many of ours to the African and East India Companies, could you have complained?

In revising what I have written, I found too much warmth in it, and was about to strike out some parts. Yet I let them go, as they will afford you this one reflection; "If a man naturally cool, and render'd still cooler by old age, is so warmed by our treatment of his country, how much must those people in general be exasperated against us? And why are we making inveterate enemies by our barbarity, not only of the present inhabitants of a great country, but of their infinitely more numerous posterity; who will in future ages detest the name of *Englishman*, as much as the children in Holland now do those of *Alva* and *Spaniard*." This will certainly happen, unless your conduct is speedily changed, and the national resentment falls where it ought to [fall] heavily, on your ministry, [or perhaps rather on the King, whose will they only execute].

With the greatest esteem and affection, and best wishes for your prosperity, I have the honour to be, dear Sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

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856. TO CAPTAINS THOMAS THOMPSON AND ELISHA HINMAN (L. C.)

Paris, 25th Novem', 1777.

SIR: — We advise you on your return to L'Orient to put your Ship in readiness for Sea,[1] — Capt. Hinman will do the same, — and after you have obtained the best intelligence to be had of the British Merchant Ships and Commerce to pursue the Course which you judge best for interrupting and making prizes on our Enemies ships and property. As it is by no means safe to return into the Ports of France, you will calculate your Stores, so as to have a sufficiency for your cruise, which we cannot indeed be particular in the Direction of. It has been suggested that one or more of the India Ships returning may be intercepted, that part of the West India homeward-bound Ships may be expected about this Time, as well as Transports returning from New York and elsewhere in America, and that by cruising in the proper Latitudes you may meet with them. That the British Factories and Commerce on the African Coast at this time lie without any Force sufficient to protect them, and that by running along that Coast you may greatly annoy and distress the Enemy in that Quarter, and afterwards go for the West Indies.

As you and Captain Hinman have already considered

[1] The *Raleigh*, a frigate of thirty-two guns. Captain Hinman's ship, *Alfred*, carried twenty guns. They arrived at L'Orient November the 7th with two of the Jamaica fleet taken by them in the English Channel. They sailed from L'Orient December 29 at 3 P.M. — ED.

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these several plans for a Cruise, we leave with you to determine which to prefer, and the manner in prosecuting either, or any other that may appear more likely to answer the design of your commission. We are happy in observing the harmony and confidence which subsists between you and Captain Hinman, and hope the same prevails between your Officers and Men, which we are certain you will cultivate through the whole of your Expedition, in which we recommend to you, to avoid giving any offence to the Flaggs of Neutral powers, and to shew them proper marks of Respect and Friendship. As you may meet with Vessels of the Enemy so near the Coast of Europe, that you may be under the Necessity of sending them into some Port of France, we advise you to agree with Messrs. Goularde, etc., on the method of conduct in such cases, previous to your departure, and give orders to the Officers to whom you give the Command of such Prizes, accordingly thereto. Whenever you judge it prudent to dismiss Prisoners, subjects of his Brittannic Majesty, we advise you to take from them in writing an acknowledgment of their having been your Prisoners, their Quality, Place of Residence, and that they are dismissed by you in confidence that an equal Number of the Subjects of the Thirteen United States of the same Rank, that now are, or may hereafter be Prisoners to his said Brittannic Majesty will be set at Liberty. You are also to deliver a Copy of such writing to the Prisoners, enjoining them to deliver the same on their arrival in Brittain to the Lords of the British Admiralty, and by the first Opportunity inclose a Duplicate to the Committee or Board of Marine in Boston, and another to us, with an acc't of your proceedings. We shall deliver Capt[a] Hinman a Copy

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of this Letter, who will proceed in Concert with you in the Cruise.

With best wishes — [incomplete].

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857. TO MAJOR THORNTON (L. C.)

[Dec. 11, 1777]

You will receive herewith a Letter to Lord North and another to Sir Grey Cooper, Secretary of the Treasury, to which you are to endeavour to obtain Answers.

As the Purport is to obtain Permission to visit and examine into the Situation of our People in their Goals, and administer to their Relief, we hope a Request so consonant to Humanity will not be refus'd. But if you cannot obtain such Permission, yet (if not absolutely forbidden) we desire you would endeavour to see the Prisoners, take an acc^{t} of their Names, the Rank or Quality they serv'd in, the State they belong'd to, in what Vessel and by whom they were taken, and such other particulars as may tend to give us perfect Information of their Circumstances.

But before you leave London to visit the Prisoners, wait on Mr. Hartley (for whom also you have a Letter which you will deliver as soon as you arrive) and desire his Advice or Orders; and if he should be so kind as to give you any relating to the Premises, you are to follow the same punctually in the future Proceedings.

You will receive herewith Fifty Guineas for Traveling Expenses, of which you will render an Acct.

We wish you a good Journey, being, sir, your most humble servants.

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858. TO SIR GREY COOPER[1] (L. C.)

Paris, Dec. 11, 1777.

DEAR SIR: — Receiving frequent Accounts by American Prisoners who have escaped from your Goals, of the miserable Situation and hard Treatment of their Countrymen at Portsmouth and Plymouth, we have prevail'd with a Gentleman, Major Thornton (to us much a Stranger, but who appears a Man of Humanity), to visit the Prisons there, and give from us some Relief to those unfortunate Men. I hope that thro' your Interest he may obtain a Permission for that purpose. I would have wish'd that some voluntary Act of Compassion on the Part of your Government towards those in your Power had appeared in abating the Rigours of their Confinement, and relieving their pressing Necessities, as such Generosity towards Enemies has naturally an Effect in softening and abating Animosity in their Compatriots and disposing to Reconciliation. This, if I had any Influence with your Ministers I should recommend as prudent, being what would at least secure a Continuance of that kind Usage your People when our Prisoners have always experienced with us. Mr. Thornton is charg'd with a Letter to Lord North, which I request you would procure him an Opportunity of delivering, and endeavour to obtain an Answer; perhaps it may not be thought proper to give any; But I am sure it will not be an insolent one like that from Lord Stormont to a similar Application. The Remembrance of ancient

[1] Sir Grey Cooper was one of the secretaries of the treasury from 1765 to 1782, under the successive governments of Chatham, Grafton, and North. He was member of Parliament for Saltash (1774-1784). — ED.

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Friendship encourages me to Request this. If 'tis too much, you can prevent a Repitition of it by making no Reply. With my affectionate Respects to Lady Cooper,[1] and love to my former young Friends, I am ever, dear Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

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859. TO JAMES LOVELL (L. C.)

Paris, Dec. 21, 1777.

SIR,

I see in a Vote of Congress shown me by Captain Franval, that Mr. Dean is disown'd in some of his Agreements with Officers. I, who am upon the Spot, and know the infinite Difficulty of resisting the powerful Solicitations here of great Men, who if disoblig'd might have it in their Power to obstruct the Supplies he was then obtaining, do not wonder, that, being then a Stranger to the People, and unacquainted with the Language, he was at first prevailed on to make some such Agreements, when all were recommended, as they always are, as *officiers expérimentés, braves comme leurs épées, pleins de Courage, de Talents, et de Zèle pour notre Cause,* &c. &c., in short, mere Cesars, each of whom would have been an invaluable Acquisition to America. You can have no Conception how we are still besieged and worried on this head, our Time cut to pieces by personal Applications, besides those contained in dozens of Letters, by every Post, which are so generally refused, that scarce one in a hundred obtains from us a simple Recommendation to Civilities.

[1] This was the second Lady Cooper, *née* Elizabeth Kennedy, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. She was the mother of two sons and two daughters, who were the "former young Friends" mentioned in the letter. — ED.

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I hope, therefore, that favourable Allowance will be made to my worthy Colleague on account of his Situation at the time, as he has long since corrected that Mistake, and daily approves himself to my certain Knowledge an able, faithful, active, and extremely useful Servant of the publick; a Testimony I think it my Duty to take this Occasion of giving to his Merit, unask'd, as, considering my great Age, I may probably not live to give it personally in Congress, and I perceive he has Enemies.

You will see the general News in the Papers. In particular I can only say at present, that our Affairs go well here; and that I am with much respect, Sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

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860. TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS[1].

Passy, December 22, 1777

DEAR NEPHEW: — You need be under no concern as to your orders being only from Mr. Deane. . As you have always acted uprightly and ably for the public service, you would be justified if you had no orders at all, but as he generally consulted with *me* and had *my* approbation in the orders he gave, and I know they were for the best and aimed at the public good, I thereby certify you that I approve and join in these you have received from him, and desire you to proceed in the execution of the same.

B. FRANKLIN.

[1] Printed by John Bigelow, "The Complete Works of Benjamin Franklin," Vol. X, p. 343. — ED.

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861. TO THE HON^ble^ COUNCIL OF THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE (U. OF P.)

Paris, Dec. 29, 1777 —

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN,

We are much obliged by your Favour of the 29th October, which brought us the first Intelligence of the Defeat and Surrender of Burgoyne's Army, which gave great Joy not only to us but to this whole friendly Nation. In return we can only tell you at present, that our Affairs here wear the most promising Appearance, and that we have little Doubt of seeing soon the Liberties & Independence of America established on the most solid Foundations which human Affairs are capable of.

This will be delivered to you by the Captain of a French Man of War, which for greater Security we have obtained to carry our Dispatches. As he may need some Supplies, we desire you would furnish him with what Money he may want to the Amount of 15000 Livres, and for your Reimbursement draw on us, or on the Congress as shall be most convenient to you. Your Drafts on us will meet with due Honour.

We are with great Esteem & Respect

Honourable Gentlemen

Your most obedient humble Servants.

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862. TO A FRIEND (L. C.)

Passy, [1777?]

You know, my dear Friend, that I am not capable of refusing you any Thing in my Power, which would be a real Kindness to you, or any Friend of yours: but when I am certain that what you request would be directly the contrary, I ought to refuse it. I know that Officers going to America for Employment will probably be disappointed; that our Armies are full; that there are a Number of Expectants unemployed, and starving for want of Subsistence; that my Recommendation will not make Vacancies, nor can it fill them, to the Prejudice of those who have a better Claim; that some of those officers I have been Prevail'd on to recommend have, by their Conduct, given no favourable Impression of my Judgment in military Merit; and then the Voyage is long, the Passage very expensive, and the Hazard of being taken and imprison'd by the English very considerable. If, after all, no Place can be found affording a livelihood for the Gentleman in question, he will perhaps be distressed in a strange Country, and ready to blaspheme his Friends, who, by their Solicitations, procured for him so unhappy a Situation.

Permit me to mention to you, that, in my Opinion, the natural complaisance of this Country often carries People too far in the Article of *Recommendations*. You give them with too much Facility to Persons of whose real Characters you know nothing, and sometimes at the request of others of whom you know as little. Frequently, if a man has no useful

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Talents, is good for nothing and burdensome to his Relations, or is indiscreet, profligate, and extravagant, they are glad to get rid of him by sending him to the other End of the World; and for that purpose scruple not to recommend him to those they wish should recommend him to others, as "*un bon sujet, plein de mérite,*" &c. &c. In consequence of my crediting such Recommendations, my own are out of Credit, and I cannot advise anybody to have the least Dependence on them. If, after knowing this, you persist in desiring my Recommendation for this Person, who is known neither to *me* nor to *you*, I will give it, tho', as I said before, I ought to refuse it.

These Applications are my perpetual Torment. People will believe, notwithstanding my continually repeated Declarations to the Contrary, that I am sent hither to engage Officers. In Truth, I never had any such Orders. It was never so much as intimated to me, that it would be agreable to my constituents. I have even received for what I have done of the kind, not indeed an absolute Rebuke, but some pretty strong *hints* of Disapprobation. Not a day passes in which I have not a Number of soliciting Visits, besides Letters. If I could gratify them all, or any of them, it would be a Pleasure. I might, indeed, give them the Recommendation and the Promises they desire, and thereby please them for the present; but, when the certain Disappointment of the Expectations with which they will so obstinately flatter themselves shall arrive, they must curse me for complying with their mad Requests, and not undeceiving them; and will become so many Enemies to our Cause and Country.

You can have no Conception how I am harass'd. All my Friends are sought out and teiz'd to teaze me. Great Officers of all Ranks, in all Departments; Ladies, great and small,

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besides professed Sollicitors, worry me from Morning to Night. The Noise of every coach now that enters my Court terrifies me. I am afraid to accept an Invitation to dine abroad, being almost sure of meeting with some Officer or Officer's Friend, who, as soon as I am put in good Humour by a Glass or two of Champaign, begins his Attack upon me. Luckily I do not often in my sleep dream myself in these vexatious Situations, or I should be afraid of what are now my only Hours of Comfort. If, therefore, you have the least remaining Kindness for me, if you would not help to drive me out of France, for God's sake, my dear friend, let this your 23d Application be your last. Yours, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

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863. A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

BRITAIN, FRANCE, SPAIN, HOLLAND, SAXONY AND AMERICA[1]

(L. C.)
(A. P. S.)

Britain. SISTER of Spain, I have a Favour to ask of you. My Subjects in America are disobedient, and I am about to chastize them; I beg you will not furnish them with any Arms or Ammunition.

Spain. Have you forgotten, then, that when my Subjects in the Low Countries rebelled against me, you not only fur-

[1] Written soon after Franklin's arrival in France. The exact date is unknown, but it appears to be the paper referred to by Reinier Arrenberg, publisher of *Gazetteer François de Leide*, in a letter to Franklin May 24, 1777 (A. P. S.).

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nish'd them with military Stores, but join'd them with an Army and a Fleet? I wonder how you can have the Impudence to ask such a Favour of me, or the Folly to expect it!

Britain. You, my dear Sister of France, will surely not refuse me this Favour.

France. Did you not assist my Rebel Hugenots with a Fleet and an Army at Rochelle? And have you not lately aided privately and sneakingly my Rebel Subjects in Corsica? And do you not at this Instant keep their Chief, pension'd, and ready to head a fresh Revolt there, whenever you can find or make an Opportunity? Dear Sister, you must be a little silly!

Britain. Honest Holland! You see it is remembered that I was once your Friend; you will therefore be mine on this Occasion. I know, indeed, you are accustom'd to smuggle with these Rebels of mine. I will wink at that; sell 'em as much Tea as you please, to enervate the Rascals, since they will not take it of me; but for God's sake don't supply them with any Arms!

Holland. 'T is true you assisted me against Philip, my Tyrant of Spain, but have I not assisted you against one of your Tyrants;[1] and enabled you to expell him? Surely that Accompt, as we Merchants say, is *ballanced*, and I am nothing in your Debt. I have indeed some Complaints against *you*, for endeavouring to starve me by your *Navigation Acts;* but, being peaceably dispos'd, I do not quarrel with you for that. I shall only go on quietly with my own Business. Trade is my Profession: 't is all I have to subsist on. And, let me tell you, I shall make no scruple (on the prospect of a good Market for that Commodity) even to send

[1] James 2d. — F.

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my ships to Hell and supply the Devil with Brimstone. For you must know, I can insure in London against the Burning of my Sails.[1]

America to Britain. Why, you old bloodthirsty Bully! You who have been everywhere vaunting your own Prowess, and defaming the Americans as poltroons! You who have boasted of being able to march over all their Bellies with a single Regiment! You who by Fraud have possessed yourself of their strongest Fortress, and all the arms they had stored up in it! You who have a disciplin'd Army in their Country, intrench'd to the Teeth, and provided with every thing! Do *you* run about begging all Europe not to supply those poor People with a little Powder and Shot? Do you mean, then, to fall upon them naked and unarm'd, and butcher them in cold Blood? Is this your Courage? Is this your Magnanimity?

Britain. Oh! you wicked — Whig — Presbyterian — Serpent! Have you the Impudence to appear before me after all your Disobedience? Surrender immediately all your Liberties and Properties into my Hands, or I will cut you to Pieces. Was it for this that I planted your country at so great an Expence? That I protected you in your Infancy, and defended you against all your Enemies?

America. I shall not surrender my Liberty and Property, but with my Life. It is not true, that my Country was planted

[1] Lord Stormont reported to the Earl of Rochford (October 31, 1775) a conversation with Comte de Vergennes: "He answered that no Power on Earth ever did or could prevent an illicit trade, which the prospect of great gain would lead men to attempt at every hazard, and then quoted the famous answer of that Dutch merchant who said that if a lucrative Trade could be carried on with Hell he would send his ships thither *au Risque de bruler leur Voiles.*" — ED.

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at your expence. Your own Records refute that Falshood to your Face. Nor did you ever afford me a Man or a Shilling to defend me against the Indians, the only Enemies I had upon my own Account. But, when you have quarrell'd with all Europe, and drawn me with you into all your Broils, then you value yourself upon protecting me from the Enemies you have made for me. I have no natural Cause of Difference with Spain, France, or Holland, and yet by turns I have join'd with you in Wars against them all. You would not suffer me to make or keep a separate Peace with any of them, tho' I might easily have done it to great Advantage. Does your protecting me in those Wars give you a Right to fleece me? If so, as I fought for you, as well as you for me, it gives me a proportionable Right to fleece you. What think you of an American Law to make a Monopoly of you and your Commerce, as you have done by your Laws of me and mine? Content yourself with that Monopoly if you are Wise, and learn Justice if you would be respected!

Britain. You impudent b——h! Am not I your Mother Country? Is that not a sufficient Title to your Respect and Obedience?

Saxony. Mother country! Hah, hah, he! What Respect have *you* the front to claim as a Mother Country? You know that *I* am *your* Mother Country, and yet you pay me none. Nay, it is but the other day, that you hired Ruffians[1] to rob me on the Highway,[2] and burn my House![3] For shame! Hide your Face and hold your Tongue. If you continue this Conduct, you will make yourself the Contempt of Europe!

[1] Prussians. — F.

[2] They enter'd and rais'd Contributions in Saxony. — F.

[3] And they burnt the fine Suburbs of Dresden, the Capital of Saxony. — F.

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Britain. O Lord! Where are my friends?

France, Spain, Holland, and Saxony, all together. Friends! Believe us, you have none, nor ever will have any, 'till you mend your Manners. How can we, who are your Neighbours, have any regard for you, or expect any Equity from you, should your Power increase, when we see how basely and unjustly you have us'd both your *own Mother and your own Children?*

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864. A CATECHISM

RELATING TO THE ENGLISH NATIONAL DEBT

Question 1. SUPPOSING this debt to be only one hundred and ninety-five millions of pounds sterling at present, although it is much more,[1] and that was all to be counted in shillings, that a man could count at the rate of one hundred shillings per minute, for twelve hours each day, till he has counted the whole, how long would he take in doing it?

Answer. One hundred forty-eight years, one hundred nine days, and twenty-two hours.

Q. 2. The whole of this sum being three thousand nine hundred millions of shillings, and the coinage standard being sixty-two in the Troy pound, what is the whole weight of this sum?

A. Sixty-one millions, seven hundred fifty-two thousand, four hundred and seventy-six Troy pounds.

[1] At present (1777) it is said to be at least two hundred and thirty millions. — F.

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Q. 3. How many ships would carry this weight, suppose one hundred tons each?

A. Three hundred and fourteen ships.

Q. 4. How many carts would carry this weight, suppose a ton in each?

A. Thirty-one thousand, four hundred and fifty-two carts.

Q. 5. The breadth of a shilling being one inch, if all these shillings were laid in a straight line, close to one another's edges, how long would that line be that would contain them?

A. Sixty-one thousand, five hundred fifty-two miles; which is nine thousand, five hundred seventy-two miles more than twice round the whole circumference of the earth.

Q. 6. Suppose the interest of this debt to be three and a half per cent per annum, what does the whole annual interest amount to?

A. Six millions, seven hundred and seventy thousand pounds.

Q. 7. How doth government raise this interest annually?

A. By taxing those who lent the principal, and others.

Q. 8. When will government be able to pay the principal?

A. When there is more money in England's treasury than there is in all Europe.

Q. 9. And when will that be?

A. Never.

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865. TO JAN INGENHOUSZ (L. C.)

An Attempt to explain the Effects of Lightning on the Vane of the Steeple of a Church in Cremona, August, 1777.

1. WHEN the subtil Fluid, which we call Fire or Heat, enters a solid Body, it separates the Particles of which that Body consists farther from each other, and thus dilates the Body, increasing its Dimensions.

2. A greater Proportion of Fire introduc'd separates the Parts so far from each other, that the solid Body becomes a Fluid, being melted.

3. A still greater Quantity of Heat separates the Parts so far, that they lose their mutual Attraction, and acquire a mutual Repulsion, whence they fly from each other, either gradually or suddenly, with great Force, as the separating Power is introduc'd gradually or suddenly.

4. Thus Ice becomes Water, and Water Vapour, which Vapour is said to expand 14,000 times the Space it occupied in the Form of Water, and with an explosive Force in certain Circumstances capable of producing great and violent Effects.

5. Thus Metals expand, melt, and explode; the two first effected by the gradual Application of the separating Power, and all three, in its sudden application, by artificial Electricity or Lightning.

6. That fluid in passing thro' a Metal Rod or Wire is generally suppos'd to occupy the whole dimension of the Rod. If the Rod is smaller in some Places than in others, the Quantity of Fluid, which is not sufficient to make any Change

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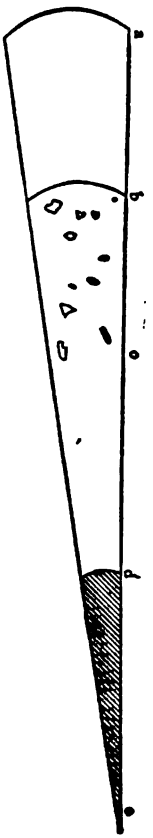
in the larger or thicker Part, may be sufficient to expand, melt, or explode the smaller, the Quantity of Fluid passing being the same, and the Quantity of Matter less that is acted upon.



7. Thus the Links of a Brass Chain, with a certain Quantity of Electricity passing thro' them, have been melted in the small Parts that form their Contact, while the rest have not been affected.

8. Thus a piece of TinFoil cut in this Form, inclos'd in a Pack of Cards, and having the Charge of a large Bottle sent thro' it, has been found unchang'd in the broadest Part, between *a* and *b*, melted only in spots between *c* and *d*, and the Part between *d* and *e* reduced to smoke by explosion.

9. The Tinfoil melted in spots between *b* and *c*, and that whole Space not being melted, seems to indicate that the Foil in the melted Parts had been thinner than the rest, on which thin Parts the passing Fluid had therefore a greater Effect.

10. Some Metals melt more easily than others; Tin more easily than Copper, Copper than Iron. It is suppos'd (perhaps not yet prov'd), that those which melt with the least of the separating Power, whether that be common Fire or the electric Fluid, do also explode with less of that Power.

11. The Explosions of Metal, like those of Gunpowder, act in all Directions. Thus the Explosion of Gold Leaf between Plates of Glass, breaking the Glass to Pieces, will

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throw those Pieces into all Parts of the Room; and the explosion of Iron, or even of Water, between the Joints of Stone in a Steeple, will scatter the Stones in all Directions round the Neighbourhood. But the Directions given to those Stones by the Explosion, is to be considered as different from the Direction of the Lightning, which happen'd to occasion those Explosions of the Matter it met with in its passage between the Clouds and the Earth.

12. When Bodies positively electriz'd approach Sharp Pointed Rods or thin Plates of Metal, these are more easily render'd negative by the repulsive Force of the Electric Fluid in those positively electriz'd Bodies, which chases away the natural Quantity contain'd in those *mince* Rods or Plates, tho' it would not have Force enough to chase the same out of larger Masses. Hence such Points, Rods, and Plates, being in a negative State, draw to themselves more strongly and in greater Quantities the Electric Fluid offer'd them, than such Masses can do which remain nearly in their natural State. And thus a pointed Rod receives not only at its Point, tho' more visibly here, but at all Parts of its length that are expos'd. Hence a Needle held between the Finger and Thumb, and presented to a charg'd Prime Conductor, will draw off the Charge more expeditiously if held near the Eye, and the rest of its Length is expos'd to the Elec^{l} Atmosphere, than if all but ½ an Inch of the Point is conceal'd and cover'd.

13. Lightning so differs from solid Projectiles, and from common Fluids projected with Violence, that, tho' its Course is rapid, it is most easily turned to follow the Direction of good Conductors. And it is doubted whether any Experiments in Electricity have yet decisively proved, that the electric

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Fluid in its violent Passage thro' the Air where a Battery is discharg'd has what we call a Momentum, which would make it continue its Course in a right Line, tho' a Conductor offer'd near that Course to give it a different or even contrary Direction; or that it has a Force capable of pushing forward or overthrowing the Objects it strikes against, even though it sometimes pierces them. Does not this seem to indicate, that the Perforation is not made by the Force of a Projectile passing thro', but rather by the Explosion or the Dilatation, in passing, of a subtil Line of Fluid?

14. Such an Explosion or Dilatation of a Line of Fluid, passing thro' a Card, would raise Burrs round the Hole, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, and sometimes on both, according to the Disposition of the Parts of the Paper near the Surfaces, without any regard to the Direction of the Fluid.

15. Great Thanks are due to the ingenious Philosopher, who examined the Vane at Cremona, and who took the Pains to describe so exactly the Effects of the Lightning upon it, and to communicate that Description. The fact is extreamly curious. It is well worth considering. He invites to that Consideration. He has fairly given his own Opinion. He will with Candour receive that of others, tho' it may happen to differ from his own. By calmly discussing rather than by warmly disputing, the truth is most easily obtained. I shall give my Opinion freely, as it is asked, hoping it may prove the true one; and promising myself, if otherwise, the Honour at least of acknowledging frankly my Error, and of being thankful to him who kindly shows it to me.

16. By the account given of this Stroke of Lightning upon the Steeple of Cremona, it appears that the Rod of Iron or

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Spindle, on which the Vane turned, was of about two Inches Circumference, terminating in a Cross above the Vane, and its lower End fix'd in a Marble Pedestal.

17. That the Plate of the Vane was Copper, 8 or 9 Inches wide, and near twice as long. That it was about one Line thick near the Spindle, and growing thinner insensibly towards the other End, where its thickness did not exceed three quarters of a Line, the Weight 20½ ounces.

18. That the Copper had been tinned over.

19. That the Marble Pedestal was split by the Stroke into many Pieces, and scatter'd over the Roof, Garden, and Court of a neighbouring Building. One Piece was thrown to the Distance of 40 Feet. The Spindle was broken and displac'd, and the Vane thrown on the Roof of the parsonage House, 20 feet from the Steeple.

20. That the Vane was perforated in 18 Places, the Holes of irregular Forms, and the Metal which had filled them push'd outwards, in some of them on one side of the Vane, in others on the other. The Copper show'd Marks of having been partly melted, and in some places Tin and Copper melted and mingled together. There were Marks of Smoke in several Places.

21. The Ragged Parts bent outwards round each Hole, being brought back to their original flat Position, were not, tho' evidently a little thinned and dilated, sufficient to fill the Place.

22. From the Effects described (19), it is clear that the Quantity of Lightning which fell on this Steeple at Cremona was very great.

23. The Vane being a thin Plate of Copper, its Edges and

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Corners may be considered as a Series of Points, and, being therefore sooner render'd negative by the repulsive Force of an approaching positive Cloud than the blunt and thick Iron Cross (12), was probably first struck, and thence became the Conductor of that great Quantity.

24. The Plate of which the Vane was formed, being thicker near the Spindle, and diminishing in Thickness gradually to the other End (17), was probably not of Copper plated by passing between Rollers, for they would have left it of equal Thickness; but of Metal plated by the Hammer. The Surface too of rolled Copper is even and plain; that of hammered is generally uneven, with Hollows occasioned by the Impressions of the Hammer.

25. In those concave Impressions the Metal is thinner than it is around them, and probably thinnest near the centre of each Impression.

26. The Lightning, which in passing thro' the Vane was not sufficient to melt its thicker Parts, might be sufficient to melt the thinner (6, 7, 8, 9), and to soften those that were in a middle State.

27. The part of the Tin (18), which covered the thinner Parts, being more easily melted and exploded than Copper (10), might possibly be exploded when the Copper was but melted. The Smoke appearing in several Places (20) is a Proof of Explosion.

28. There might probably be more Tin in the concave Impressions of the Hammer on one Side of the Plate, than of the Convex Part of those Impressions on the other. Hence stronger Explosions on the Concave side.

29. The nature of those Explosions is to act violently in all directions; and in this case, being near the Plate, they

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would act against it on one side, while they acted against the Air on the other.

30. These thin Parts of the Plate being at the same instant partly in fusion, and partly so softned as to be near it, the softned Parts were push'd outwards, a Hole made, and some of the melted Parts blown away; hence there was not left Metal enough to re-fill the Vacancy by bending back the ragged Parts to their Places.

31. The concave Impressions of the hammer, being indifferently made on both sides of the Plate, it is natural, from 28, 29, 30, that the Pushing outwards of the softned Metal by Explosions, should be on both sides of the Plate in a proportion nearly equal.

32. That the Force of a simple electric Explosion is very great, appears from the Geneva Experiment, wherein a Spark between two Wires, under Oil in a drinking-Glass, breaks the Glass, Body, Stem, and Foot, all to Shivers.

33. The electric Explosion of Metal acts with still more Force. A Strip of Leaf-Gold no broader than a Straw, exploded between two Pieces of thick looking-Glass, will break the Glass to Pieces, tho' confin'd by the Screws of a strong Press. And between two Pieces of Marble press'd together by a Weight of 20 Pounds, will lift that Weight. Much less Force is necessary to move the melted and softned Parts of a thin Plate of Copper.

34. This Explication of the Appearances on the Vane is drawn from what we already know of Electricity and the Effects of Lightning. The learned Author of the Account gives a different but very ingenious one, which he draws from the Appearances themselves. The Matter push'd out of the Holes is found, that of some on one side of the Plate,

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and of others on the other. Hence he supposes them to be occasion'd (if I understand him rightly) by Streams or Threads of Electric Matter of different and contrary kinds, rushing violently towards each other, and meeting with the Vane, so accidentally placed, as to be found precisely in the Place of their Meeting, where it was pierc'd by all of them, they all striking on both its Sides at the same instant. This however is so extraordinary an Accident, as to be in the Author's own opinion almost miraculous; "Passeranno" (says he) "forse più secoli prima que ritorni tralle infinite combinazioni un caso simile a quello della banderuola che ora abbiamo per mano. Forza è que si esaurisca una non più udita miniera di fulmini sopra una grande città, pressoque seminata di campanili e di banderuole, il che è rarissimo; e può ancora più volte ciò succedere, senza che s' incontri giammai un altra banderuola tanto opportunatamente situata tra i limiti della fulminea explosione."

35. But, tho' the Author's Explication of these Appearances of the Vane does not satisfy me, I am not so confident of my own as to propose its being accepted without Confirmation by Experiment. Those who have strong electric Batteries may try it thus; form a little Vane of Paper, and spot it on both sides by attaching small Pieces of Leaf-Gold or Tinfoil, not exactly opposite to each other; then send the whole Force of the Battery thro' the Vane, entring at one End of it and going out at the other. If the Metal explodes, I imagine it will be found to make Holes in the Paper, forcing the torn Parts out on the Side opposite to the Metal. A more expensive but perhaps more satisfactory Experiment would be, to make a new Vane as exactly as possible like that in question, in all the Particulars of its Description, and place

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it on a tall Mast fix'd on some Hill subject to Strokes of Lightning, with a better Conductor to the Earth than the Wood of the Mast; if this should be struck in the Course of a few Years, and the same Effects appear upon it, it would be still more miraculous to suppose it happen'd by Accident to be exactly situated where those crossing threads of different Electricities were afterwards to meet.

36. The Perforation of Glass Bottles when overcharg'd is, I imagine, a different case, and not explicable by either of these Hypotheses. I cannot well suppose the Breach to be occasion'd by the Passage of Electricity thro' it; since a single Bottle, tho' so broken in the Discharge, always is found to send round in its usual Course the Quantity with which it was charged. Then the Breach never happens but at the Instant of the circuitous Discharge, either by the discharging Rod, or in overleaping the Borders of the Glass. Thus, I have been present when a Battery of twenty Glasses was discharg'd by the discharging Rod, and produc'd the same Effect in its Circuit as if the bottles had none of them been pierced; and yet, on examining them, we found no less than twelve of them in that Situation. Now, all the Bottles of the Battery being united by a Communication of all the Outsides together, and of all the Insides together, if one of them had been pierc'd by a forc'd Passage of the different kinds of Electricity to meet each other, before the Discharge by the discharging Rod, it would not only have prevented the Passage of the Electricity by the common Circuit, but it would have sav'd all the rest of its Fellows, by conducting the whole thro' its own Breach. And it is not easy to conceive that 12 Bottles in 20 should be so equally strong as to support the whole Strength of their Charge, till the Circuit of their

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Discharge was opened, and then be so equally weak as to break all together when the Weight of that Charge was taken off from them by opening the Circuit. At some other time I will give you my Opinion of this Effect, if you desire it.

I have taken the Acc[t] of this Stroke of Lightning from an Italian Piece, intitled *Analisi d' un nuovo Fenomeno del Fulmine*, the dedication of which is subscribed *Carlo Barletti, delle Scuole Pie*, who I suppose is the Author. As I do not perfectly understand that Language, I may possibly in some things have mistaken that Philosopher's Meaning. I therefore desire, my dear Friend, that you would not permit this to be published, till you have compar'd and considered it with that original Piece, and communicated to me your Remarks and Corrections. Nor would I in any Case have it appear with my Name, as perhaps it may occasion Disputes, and I have no time to attend to them.

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866. TO RALPH IZARD[1] (A. P. S.)

Passy, Jan. 29, 1778

DEAR SIR,

I received yours late last Evening. Present Circumstances which I will explain to you when I have the Hon[r] of seeing you, prevent my giving it a full Answer now. The Reasons

[1] Ralph Izard (1742–1804), a South Carolinian, was appointed by Congress United States Commissioner to the court of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. He did not go to Florence, but remained in Paris during the whole period of his appointment. He was there while the treaty of alliance was in the progress of negotiation, and he considered himself improperly overlooked in not being consulted as to certain parts of the treaty by the other commissioners. He wrote a complaining letter on the subject to Dr. Franklin, to which the above is an answer. His letter is in D. S. W., and is printed in the "Diplomatic Correspondence" (Sparks), Vol. II, p. 372. — ED.

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you offer had before been all under Consideration; but I must submit to remain some days under the Opinion you appear to have form'd not only of my poor Understanding in the general Interests of America, but of my Defects in Sincerity, Politeness & Attention to your Instructions. These offences I flatter myself will admit of fair Excuses [or rather will be found not to have existed].[1] You mention, that you *feel yourself hurt.* Permit me to offer you a Maxim, which has thro' Life been of Use to me & may be so to you in preventing such imaginary Hurts. It is, always to *suppose* one's Friends *may be right* till one *finds* them wrong; rather than *to suppose them wrong* till one *finds* them right. You have heard and imagined all that can be said or suppos'd on one side of the Question, but not on the other. I am nevertheless, with sincere Esteem, dear Sir, etc.

B. FRANKLIN.

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867. TO JAMES HUTTON[2] (L. C.) (P. A. E. E. U.)

Passy, February 1, 1778.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,

You desired, that if I had no Propositions to make, I would at least give my Advice. I think it is Ariosto who says, that

[1] Thus in Sparks; the passage in brackets is not found in the draft in A. P. S. — ED.

[2] James Hutton (1715-1795) was the son of the Rev. John Hutton, a nonjuring clergyman. He was a bookseller, having a shop at the Bible and Sun, west of Temple Bar. He corresponded with Count Zinzendorf, and became an active leader in the Moravian Church. He was greatly interested in the missionary labors of the church, and was one of the founders of the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel. See "Memoir" by Daniel Benham. W. T. Franklin said of him: "He was a faithful brother of the

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all things lost on Earth are to be found in the Moon; on which somebody remarked, that there must be a great deal of good Advice in the Moon. If so, there is a good deal of mine, formerly given and lost in this Business. I will, however, at your Request give a little more, but without the least Expectation that it will be followed; for none but God can at the same time give good Counsel, and Wisdom to make use of it.

You have lost by this mad War, and the Barbarity with which it has been carried on, not only the Government and Commerce of America, and the public Revenues and private Wealth arising from that Commerce, but what is more, you have lost the Esteem, Respect, Friendship, and Affection of all that great and growing People, who consider you at present, and whose Posterity will consider you, as the worst and wickedest Nation upon Earth. A Peace you may undoubtedly obtain by dropping all your Pretensions to govern us; and, by your superior skill in huckstering negotiation, you may possibly make such an apparently advantageous Treaty as shall be applauded in your Parliament; but, if you do not, with the Peace, recover the Affections of that People, it will not be a lasting nor a profitable one, nor will it

Moravian fraternity fifty-five years; the latter part of his life was spent literally in going about doing good, and his charities were confined to no sect. He married a lady of the Moravian nation and religion, but had no children, and was a widower some years before his death. Mr. Hutton possessed strong sense, with quick feelings and apprehensions, which the illumination of his countenance evinced even at seventy, though his difficulty of hearing was such, that he could only converse by the assistance of an ear-trumpet. He was highly esteemed by their present Majesties, and well known to many of the nobility and men of letters; nor was he refused admittance to the highest ranks, even at Buckingham-House, though his ardent benevolence inclined him greatly to neglect his own dress, that he might the better feed the hungry and cover the naked." — ED.

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afford you any part of that Strength, which you once had by your Union with them, and might (if you had been wise enough to take Advice) have still retained.

To recover their Respect and Affection, you must tread back the Steps you have taken. Instead of honouring and rewarding the American Advisers and Promoters of this War, you should disgrace them; with all those who have inflamed the Nation against America by their malicious Writings; and all the Ministers and Generals who have prosecuted the War with such Inhumanity. This would show a national change of Disposition, or a Disapprobation of what had passed.

In proposing terms, you should not only grant such as the Necessity of your Affairs may evidently oblige you to grant, but such additional ones as may show your Generosity, and thereby demonstrate your good Will. For instance, perhaps you might, by your Treaty, retain all Canada, Nova Scotia and the Floridas. But if you would have a real friendly as well as able Ally in America, and avoid all occasions of future Discord, which will otherwise be continually arising on your American Frontiers, you should throw in those Countries. And you may call it, if you please, an Indemnification for the needless and cruel burning of their Towns, which Indemnification will otherwise be some time or other demanded.

I know your People can not see the Utility of such Measures, and will never follow them, and even call it Insolence and Impudence in me to mention them. I have, however, complied with your Desire, and am, as ever, your affectionate friend,

B. FRANKLIN.

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Passy Feb. 12, 1778.

DEAR OLD FRIEND. — I wrote the above some time before I receiv'd yours, acquainting me with your speedy and safe Return, which gave me Pleasure. I doubted after I had written it, whether it would be well to send it: For as your proud Nation despises us exceedingly, and demands and expects absolute and humble Submission, all Talk of Treaty must appear Impudence, and tend to provoke rather than conciliate. As you still press me by your last to say something, I conclude to send what I had written, for I think the Advice is good, tho' it must be useless; and I cannot, as some amongst you desire, make Propositions, having none committed to me to make; but we can treat, if any are made to us; which, however, we do not expect. I abominate with you all Murder, and I may add, that the Slaughter of Men in an unjust Cause is nothing less than Murder; I therefore never think of your present Ministers and their Abettors, but with the Image, strongly painted in my View, of their Hands, red, wet, and dropping with the Blood of my Countrymen, Friends, and Relations. No Peace can be sign'd by those hands. Peace and Friendship will, nevertheless, subsist for ever between Mr. Hutton and his affectionate, B. F.

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868. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S. W.)

Passy, Feb. 12, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

A thousand Thanks for your so readily engaging in the Means of relieving our poor Captives, and the pains you have taken, and the Advances you have made, for that purpose.

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I received your kind Letter of the 3d Instant, and send you enclosed a Bill for 100£. I much approve of Mr. Wren's prudent, as well as benevolent Conduct in the Disposition of the Money; and wish him to continue doing what shall appear to him and to you to be right, which I am persuaded will appear the same to me and my Colleagues here. I beg you will present him, when you write, my respectful Acknowledgments.

Your "earnest Caution and Request, that nothing may ever persuade America to throw themselves into the Arms of France, for that Times may mend; and that an American must always be a Stranger in France, but that Great Britain may for Ages to come be their home," marks the goodness of your Heart, your Regard for us, and Love of your Country. But when your Nation is hiring all the Cut-Throats it can collect of all Countries and Colours, to destroy us, it is hard to persuade us not to ask or accept of Aid from any Power, that may be prevail'd with to grant it; and this from the hope that tho' you now thirst for our Blood, and pursue us with Fire and Sword, you may in some future time treat us kindly. This is too much Patience to be expected of us; indeed, I think it is not in human nature.

The Americans are received and treated here in France with a Cordiality, a Respect, and Affection they never experienc'd in England when they most deserved it; and which is now (after all the Pains taken to exasperate the English against them, and render them odious as well as contemptible,) less to be expected there than ever. And I cannot see why we may not upon an Alliance, hope for a Continuance of it, at least of as much as the Swiss enjoy, with whom France has maintained a faithful Friendship for 200 Years past,

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and whose People appear to live here in as much Esteem as the Natives. America has been *forc'd* and *driven* into the Arms of France. She was a dutiful and virtuous Daughter. A cruel Mother-in-Law turn'd her out of Doors, defam'd her, and sought her Life. All the World knows her Innocence, and takes her part; and her Friends hope soon to see her honourably married. They can never persuade her Return and Submission to so barbarous an Enemy. In her future Prosperity, if she forgets and forgives, 'tis all that can reasonably be expected of her. I believe she will make as good and useful a Wife as she did a Daughter, that her Husband will love and honour her, and that the Family from which she was so wickedly expelled, will long regret the Loss of her.

I know not whether a Peace with us is desired in England; I rather think it is not at present, unless on the old impossible Terms of Submission and receiving Pardon. Whenever you shall be disposed to make Peace upon equal and reasonable Terms, you will find little Difficulty, if you get first an honest Ministry. The present have all along acted so deceitfully and treacherously as well as inhumanly towards the Americans, that I imagine, the absolute want of all Confidence in them, will make a Treaty at present, between them and the Congress impracticable.

The Subscription for the Prisoners will have excellent Effects in favour of Englishmen and of England. The Scotch Subscription for raising Troops to destroy us, tho' amounting to much greater Sums, will not do their Nation half so much good. If you have an Opportunity, I wish you would Express our respectful Acknowledgments and Thanks to your Committee and Contributors, whose Benefactions

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will make our Poor People as comfortable as their Situation can permit. Adieu, my dear Friend. Accept my Thanks for the excellent Papers you enclosed to me. Your Endeavours for Peace, tho' unsuccessful, will always be a Comfort to you, and in time, when this mad War shall be universally execrated, will be a solid Addition to your Reputation. I am ever, with the highest Esteem, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. An old Friend of mine, Mr. Hutton, a Chief of the Moravians, who is often at the Queen's Palace, and is sometimes spoken to by the King, was over here lately. He pretended to no Commission, but urged me much to propose some Terms of Peace, which I avoided. He has wrote to me since his return, pressing the same thing, and expressing with some Confidence that we might have every thing short of absolute Independence, &c. Inclosed I send my Answers open, that you may read them, and, if you please, copy, before you deliver or forward them. They will serve to shew you more fully my Sentiments, tho' they serve no other purpose.

B. F.

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869. TO CONRAD ALEXANDRE GÉRARD DE RAYNEVAL (P. A. E. E. U.)

Passy, Sunday 5. P. M.
Feb. 22. 1778.

SIR

The News you have received from England cannot be true. No Treaty would be entered into with Howe by Washington, when the Congress was at hand: And Howe could have no Proposition to make but such as were authoris'd

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by the Act of Parliament, and had been long since rejected, (viz.) *Pardon upon Submission.*

Enclos'd we send you a Letter this moment received from Mr. Hartley [1] a Member of Parliament, which confirms our Opinion that no such Transaction is going on in America, as it announces Propositions made by the Minister Feb. 17. to impower by an Act Commissioners to treat with America. Mr. Franklin will transcribe and send you to-morrow the whole of his correspondence with that Gentleman. — In short we esteem the Story of a Treaty in America, to be merely an Artifice of the Stock Jobbers to keep up the Funds. We have the Honour to be

Sir

Your most obedient
humble Servant

B. FRANKLIN.
SILAS DEANE.

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870. TO ARTHUR LEE (L. C.)

Passy, Feb. 23, 1778.

SIR,

The enclos'd, which you sent me, contain'd a Letter from Mr. Hartley, in which he acquaints me, that on the 17th Lord North had made his Propositions towards a Conciliation with America, and ask'd leave to bring in two Bills, one to renounce all Claim of Taxation, the other to empower Commissioners to treat with any Persons or Bodies of Men in America on a Peace; which was unanimously agreed to.

[1] David Hartley to Franklin, February 18, 1778. Gérard was at this time first secretary to the foreign office. — ED.

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He tells me Lord N. had express'd to him the strongest Desire of Accommodation, and even wish'd him to come over to Paris and talk with us, etc. I should send you the Letter, which marks strongly the Consternation they are in; but, M. Gérard having written a Note acquainting Mr. D. that they had News from England that a Treaty was on foot between Washington and Howe, and desiring to know if we had any Intelligence of it, I wrote the enclos'd in answer, and sent Mr. Hartley's letter to him, to show that the Ministers in England had no such News. Mr. Hartley refers me to Mr. Thornton for the Titles of the two Bills. I return Mr. Thornton's Letters. I am, very respectfully, Sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

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871. TO CONRAD ALEXANDRE GÉRARD DE RAYNEVAL (P. A. E. E. U.)

Passy, Feb. 24. 1778.

SIR: — Understanding that Reports have been spread at Versailles, of Treaties on foot in America between the Congress and the English Commissioners; or here between us and the English Ministry; I send you an American Newspaper[1] of Dec^r 19, by which you will see, in the Passages marked with a Pen, in what manner such Reports, and those who occasion them, are treated there. I send you also the only Correspondence I have had, which has any Relation to the same Subject here; that you may judge of the Credit due to such Reports.

I have the Honour to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

[1] *The Independent Chronicle and Universal Advertiser*, Boston, December, 19, 1777. — ED.

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872. TO CONRAD ALEXANDRE GÉRARD DE RAYNEVAL [1] (P. A. E. E. U.)

Passy, Feb. 25. 1778.

Sir: — I received last night the enclos'd Letter from a Member of Parliament,[2] and the two frivolous Bills which the Ministry in their present Consternation have thought fit to propose, with a View to support their publick Credit a little longer at home, and to amuse and divide, if possible our People in America. You will see that they have dispatch'd a Frigate with the News, but I hope yours from Bordeaux will arrive first. I wish to have the original Letters again when you have perus'd them. I have the honour to be, with great Respect, etc.,

B. Franklin.

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873. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S. W.)

Passy, Feb. 26, 1778.

Dear Sir,

I receiv'd yours of the 18th and 20th of this Month, with Lord North's proposed Bills. The more I see of the Ideas and Projects of your Ministry, and their little Arts and Schemes of amusing and dividing us, the more I admire the prudent, manly, and magnanimous Propositions contained in your intended Motion for an Address to the King. What Reliance can we have on an Act expressing itself to be only

[1] This letter is endorsed: "Wharton to Lee, 24 February, 1778, *London Evening Post*, 18 January, 1778." — Ed.

[2] David Hartley. — Ed.

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a Declaration of the *Intention* of Parliament concerning the *Exercise* of the Right of imposing Taxes in America, when, in the Bill itself, as well as in the Title, a Right is suppos'd and claimed, which never existed; and a *present Intention* only is declared not to use it, which may be changed by another Act next Session, with a Preamble, that this *Intention* being found inexpedient, it is thought proper to repeal this Act, and resume the Exercise of *the Right* in its full Extent? If any solid permanent Benefit was intended by this, why is it confin'd to the Colonies of North America, and not extended to the loyal ones in the Sugar Islands? But it is now needless to criticise, as all Acts that suppose your future Government of the Colonies can be no longer significant.

In the Act for appointing Commissioners, instead of full Powers to agree upon Terms of Peace and Friendship, with a Promise of ratifying such Treaty as they shall make in pursuance of those Powers, it is declared that their Agreements shall have no force nor Effect, nor be carried into Execution till approved of by Parliament, so that every thing of Importance will be uncertain. But they are allow'd to proclaim a Cessation of Arms, and revoke their Proclamation, as soon as in confidence of it, our Militia have been allowed to go home: They may suspend the Operation of Acts, prohibiting Trade; and take off the Suspension when our Merchants, in consequence of it have been induc'd to send their Ships to Sea; in short, they may do every thing that can have a Tendency to divide and distract us, but nothing that can afford us Security. Indeed, Sir, your Ministers do not yet know us. We may not be quite so cunning as they; but we have really more Sense as well as more Courage

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than they have ever been willing to give us Credit for: And I am persuaded that these Acts will rather obstruct Peace than promote it, and that they will not in America answer the mischievous and malevolent Ends for which they were intended. In England they may indeed amuse the Public Creditors, give Hopes and Expectations, that shall be of some present use, and continue the Mismanagers a little longer in their Places. *Voilà tout!*

In return for your repeated Advice to us, not to conclude any Treaty with the House of Bourbon, permit me to give (through you) a little Advice to the Whigs in England. Let nothing induce them to join with the Tories, in supporting and continuing this wicked War against the Whigs of America, whose Assistance they may hereafter want to secure their own Liberties, or whose Country they may be glad to retire to for the Enjoyment of them.

If Peace by a Treaty with America, upon equal Terms were really desired, your Commissioners need not go there for it; supposing that as they are impower'd by the Bill "to treat with such Person or Persons, as in their Wisdom and Discretion they shall think meet," they should happen to conceive, that the Commissioners at Paris might be included in that Description. I am ever, dear Sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. Seriously, on further thoughts, I am of opinion, that, if wise and honest men, such as Sir George Saville, the Bishop of St. Asaph, and yourself, were to come over here immediately with powers to treat, you might not only obtain peace with America, but prevent a war with France.

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874. TO THOMAS CUSHING[1] (B. M.)

Passy near Paris, Feb^{ry} 27th, 1778.

SIR,

I received your favour by Mr. Austin, with your most agreable Congratulations on the Success of the American Arms in the Northern Department.[2] In Return, give me leave to congratulate you on the Success of our Negotiations here, in the completion of the two Treaties with his Most Christian Majesty; the one of Amity and Commerce, on the Plan of that Projected in Congress, with some good additions; the Other of Alliance for Mutual Defence, in which the Most Christian King agrees to make a Common Cause with the United States, if England attempts to Obstruct the Commerce of his Subjects with them; and guarantees to the United States their Liberties, Sovereignty, and Independance, absolute and unlimited, with the Possessions they now have, or may have, at the Conclusion of the War; and the States in return guarantees to him his Possessions in the West Indies. The great Principle in both Treaties is a perfect Equality and reciprocity; no Advantages being demanded by France, or Privileges in Commerce, which the States may not grant to any and every other Nation.

In short, the King has treated with us Generously and Magnanimously; taking no advantage of our present Diffi-

[1] The original letter is in the Haldimand Manuscripts, in the British Museum. — ED.

[2] Surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga.

Jonathan Loring Austin (1748–1826), son of Benjamin Austin, of Boston, was the express messenger to convey to the commissioners the news of Burgoyne's surrender. He carried a letter of introduction from Thomas Cushing (dated October 30, 1777). — ED.

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culties, to exact Terms which we wou'd not willingly grant, when establish'd in Prosperity and Power. I may add that he has acted wisely, in wishing the Friendship contracted by these Treaties may be durable, which probably it might not be, if a contrary Conduct had been observed.

Several of our American Ships, with Stores for the Congress, are now about sailing, under the Protection of a French Squadron. England is in great Consternation, and the Minister, on the 17th Instant, confessing in a long Speech that all his Measures had been wrong, and that Peace was necessary, proposed two Bills for Quieting America; but they are full of Artifice and Deceit, and will, I am confident, be treated accordingly by our Country.

I think you must have much satisfaction in so valuable a son, whom I wish safe back to you, and am with great esteem, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. The treaties were signed by the plenipotentiaries on both sides, February 6th, but are still for some reason kept secret, though soon to be published. It is understood that Spain will soon accede to the same. The treaties are forwarded to Congress by this conveyance.

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875. TO MRS. CATHERINE GREENE[1] (P. C.)

Paris, Feb. 28, 1778.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND

Don't be offended at the Word *old;* I don't mean to call you an *old Woman;* it relates only to the Age of our Friendship; which on my part has always been a sincerely affectionate one, and I flatter myself the same on yours.

I received your kind Letter from Boston of Oct. 28. which gave me great Pleasure, as it inform'd me of the Welfare of you and your Family. I continue hearty, as do my two Grandsons, who present their Respects to you & Mr. Greene, being pleas'd with your Remembrance of them. We are all glad to hear of Ray, for we all love him. — I have been often much concern'd for my Friends at Warwick, hearing that the Enemy was so near them. I hope your Troubles will not be of much longer Duration: For tho' the Wickedness of the English Court, & its Malice against us is as great as ever, its Horns are shortened; its Strength diminishes daily; and we have formed an Alliance here, & shall form others, that will help to keep the Bull quiet and make him orderly. — I chat, you see as usual, any how, with you, who are kind enough never to *criticise* Improprieties in my Compositions or anything else. — I see by yours that my Sisters granddaughter is married. I wish the young Folks joy and Lasting Happiness. I pity my poor old Sister, to be so harassed & driven about by the enemy. For I feel a little myself the Inconvenience of being driven about by my friends. — I live

[1] From *The Rhode Island Mercury*, April 11, 1896. The original is in the possession of Mrs. E. J. Roelker. — ED.

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here in great Respect, and dine every day with great folks; but I still long for home & for Repose; and should be happy to eat Indian Pudding in your Company & under your hospitable Roof. Remember me kindly to the Remainder of the Wards, and to all that wish me well. Assure Mr. Greene of my sincere esteem & Respect, and believe me ever,

My dear Friend
Yours most affectionately
B. FRANKLIN

My Respects to Dr. Babcock & Family when you see any of them

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876. TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS[1] (P. C.)

February (?), 1778.

DEAR JONA[H]

Mr. Chaumont will acquaint you that he has this Day obtain'd an Order for the Payment of the Value of the 2 Prizes to the Owners in America of the Privateers. I congratulate you upon it. Mr. Lee talks of nominating you and Mr. Lloyd jointly to supply the Place of Mr. Morris and himself in doing the Business of the Congress. I question whether there be Flesh enough upon the Bone for two to pick. I doubt its being worth your while to accept of it. I did not thank him for mentioning you because I do not wish to be much oblig'd to him and less to be a little oblig'd. You must judge for yourself, and will do as you shall think fit. He has brought up all Mr. Morris's Papers

[1] From the original in the possession of Mr. Louis A. Biddle. — ED.

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and wants to put them into our Hands. I am doubtful of meddling with them.

Great Complaints are made at Court of the Delay of our Ships so long after asking and obtaining Convoy. Does any Part of this Fault lie at your Door? I believe not. But pray enable me to justify you. It is said that Lyon waited long for a Package of Hats. What and whose Hats are they? Or is it not true.

I have just written to your Father that you are well.

I am ever, your Affectionate Uncle

B. FRANKLIN.

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877. TO SAMUEL ADAMS (L. L.)

Passy, near Paris, March 2, 1778

DEAR SIR,

By this Conveyance the Treaties we have concluded here go over to Congress. I flatter myself they will meet with Approbation. If there sh^d^ be any Particulars which the Congress would wish to be chang'd or added, there is at present an exceeding good Disposition in this Court to oblige; and no Proposition tolerably reasonable will meet with Difficulty. But the way will be to ratify these treaties, and then propose separate additional or explanatory Articles. —

I send you enclos'd some notes just receiv'd from a Member of P. in which you will see something of the present Court Views: — But we have fuller advices on one particular, viz. That their great Hope is to *divide*, by means of their Commissioners. They say they have certain Advice that they have a large Party in the Congress, almost a Majority, who are for returning to the Dependency. In the

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enclos'd Copy of a Letter to M^r. Hartley you will see my Sentiments of their two Bills, as well as in our general Letter. — I have but little time. D^r Cooper will show you what I have written to him. America at present stands in the highest Light of Esteem & Respect thro'out Europe. A Return to Dependence on England would sink her into eternal Contempt. — I am with true Esteem & Respect

Dear Sir, Your most obedient
humble Servant
B. FRANKLIN

You may observe in the Letter to M^r. Hartley, a Hint that the Commissioners might come to Paris & treat with us. — We have indeed no express Power to treat with England particularly: But one of the Resolutions of Congress gives us a general Power to treat of *Peace*, Amity & Commerce with an European Nation. —

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878. TO WILLIAM LEE[1] (A. P. S.)

Passy Mar. 2. 1778

SIR

The Accidents that several times prevented our Meeting for the purpose of complying with your Request in receiving for you M^r Morris's Papers having allow'd me more time to consider that matter, I am of Opinion, that if instead of bring^g them to Paris, you had thought it proper when at Nantes to separate those that related to the Affairs or House of Willing & Morris, from those which related to the Business of the

[1] William Lee (1737–1795), brother of Arthur Lee, sheriff of Middlesex (1773), and commercial agent for the United States at Nantes (1777). — ED.

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Committee, delivering the first to Mr Ross, and the others to such Person or Persons as you might have appointed to act in your Place for the Committee, no Inconvenience would have attended that Disposition. At present I do not see the Necessity, nor the Utility of my being concern'd in opening the Trunk that contains those Papers; I apprehend that I have nothing to do with that Operation, and I am unwilling to be concern'd in it. If you chuse on your Departure for Germany, to leave the Trunk entire, seal'd as it is in my hands, on a Receipt to redeliver it in the same state to you or your Order, I have no Objection to receiving and taking what care I can of it. Otherwise I must decline meddling with it. I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient
humble Servant
B. F.

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879. TO WILLIAM LEE (A. P. S.)

Passy, March 6. 1778

Sir,

I return the Keys by the Person that brings them from you. I had rather your Brother should keep them while he stays in France. —

Your Proposition about appointing Agents in the Ports shall be laid before the Commissioners when they meet. In the meantime, I can only say, that as to my Nephew Mr. Williams, tho' I have from long Knowledge & Experience of him, a high Opinion of his Abilities, Activity, & Integrity, I will have no hand in his Appointment or in Approving of it; not being desirous of his being any Way concern'd in that

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Business. And the other Gentlemen I know so little of, that I can have no Objection to them; but I do not see that I have any thing to do with their Appointment.

In looking over yours of the 2d Instant, I observe an Expression which I do not like tho' it appears in the Shape of a Compliment, It is in these Words, I am always willing to submit my Judgment to yours and will *therefore* deliver the Trunk. This implies that I had advis'd the Delivery of the Trunk to me, which you comply'd with contrary to your own Judgment. In Truth I did not nor do advise any thing about it. I only said in Answer to yours, expressing that your Journey to Germany was delay'd by its remaining in your Hands, that if you chose to leave it with me entire & seal'd I had no Objection to receiving it deliverable in the same state to you or your Order.

I am oblig'd to you for your good Opinion of my Nephew manifested in your Intention of nominating him as above; and I beg you to accept my Thanks, tho' for particular Reasons which you know, I do not wish him to accept the Employment.

I have the honour to be with great Respect, Sir,

Your most obed[t] hum[l] Serv[t]

B. F.

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880. A TRUE HISTORY OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE COLONIES AND THE AUTHOR OF THE STAMP ACT.[1] (D. S. W.)

Passy, March 12, 1778.

DEAR SIR: — In the pamphlets you were so kind as to lend me there is one important fact misstated, apparently from the writer's not having been furnished with good information. It is the transaction between Mr. Grenville and the colonies, wherein he understands that Mr. Grenville demanded of them a specific sum, that they refused to grant anything, and that it was on their refusal only that he made the motion for the Stamp Act. No one of the particulars was true. The fact was this:

Some time in the winter of 1763–4 Mr. Grenville called together the agents of the several colonies, and told them that he purposed to draw a revenue from America; and to that end his intention was to levy a stamp duty on the colonies by act of Parliament in the ensuing session, of which he thought it fit that they should be immediately acquainted, that they might have time to consider; and if any other duty equally productive would be more agreeable to them, they might let him know it. The agents were therefore directed to write this to their respective Assemblies, and communicate to him the answers they should receive; the agents wrote accordingly.

[1] Francis Wharton, upon what authority I know not, cites David Hartley as the person to whom this communication was addressed. See "The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States," Vol. II, p. 513. — ED.

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I was a member in the Assembly of Pennsylvania when this notification came to hand. The observations there made upon it were, that the ancient, established, and regular method of drawing aid from the colonies was this: The occasion was always first considered by their sovereign in his Privy Council, by whose sage advice he directed his Secretary of State to write circular-letters to the several governors, who were directed to lay them before their Assemblies. In those letters the occasion was explained to their satisfaction, with gracious expressions of his Majesty's confidence in their known duty and affection, on which he relied that they would grant such sums as should be suitable to their abilities, loyalty, and zeal for his service; that the colonies had always granted liberally on such requisitions, and so liberally during the late war, that the king, sensible they had granted much more than their proportion, had recommended it to Parliament five years successively to make them some compensation, and the Parliament accordingly returned them £200,000 a year, to be divided among them; that the proposition of taxing them in Parliament, was therefore both cruel and unjust; that, by the constitution of the colonies, their business was with the king in matters of aid; they had nothing to do with any financier, nor he with them; nor were the agents the proper channels through which requisitions should be made; it was therefore improper for them to enter into any stipulation, or make any proposition to Mr. Grenville about laying taxes on their constituents by Parliament, which had really no right at all to tax them, especially as the notice he had sent them did not appear to be by the king's order, and perhaps was without his knowledge, as the king, when he would obtain anything from them, always accompanied his

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requisition with good words, but this gentleman, instead of a decent demand, sent them a menace, that they should certainly be taxed, and only left them the choice of the manner. But all this notwithstanding, they were so far from refusing to grant money that they resolved to the following purpose: "That they always had, so they always should think it their duty to grant aid to the crown, according to their abilities, whenever required of them in the usual constitutional manner." I went soon after to England, and took with me an authentic copy of this resolution, which I presented to Mr. Grenville before he brought in the Stamp Act. I asserted in the House of Commons (Mr. Grenville being present) that I had done so, and he did not deny it. Other colonies made similar resolutions, and had Mr. Grenville, instead of that act, applied to the king in council for such requisitional letters to be circulated by the Secretary of State, I am sure he would have obtained more money from the colonies by their voluntary grants than he himself expected from the stamps. But he chose compulsion rather than persuasion, and would not receive from their good-will what he thought he could obtain without it. And thus the golden bridge which the ingenious author thinks the Americans unwisely and unbecomingly refused to hold out to the minister and Parliament, was actually held out to them, but they refused to walk over it.

This is the true history of that transaction; and as it is probable there may be another edition of that excellent pamphlet, I wish this may be communicated to the candid author, who, I doubt not, will correct that error.

I am ever, with sincere esteem, dear sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

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881. TO ARTHUR LEE (A. P. S.)

Passy, March 17. 1778

DEAR SIR,

One of the Messrs. Beaumann's of Bordeaux some time since told me they intended to send a Packet every Month to America, on their own account, they having great Concerns there. He offer'd, indeed, to carry our Dispatches; but as at this Distance we could not know the Captains, nor the Degree of Confidence that might be plac'd in them, and having other Conveyances, I have not yet seen Occasion to make use of that Offer. These are the Packets I mention'd to the Gentleman, as likely to afford him the Convenience of a Passage; and he understood more than I said to him, when he imagin'd there was a Packet to sail soon with our Dispatches. I knew of no such thing proposed; and certainly if it had been proposed by me or with my Knowledge, I should have acquainted you with it.

A Gentleman lately arrived from Boston, has presented for Acceptance Bills drawn on us by Mr. Hancock, as the President of the Congress, for about 180,000 Livres. I have also receiv'd a Letter, mentioning that other Bills are drawn on us by Mr. Laurens, the present President, of which an Account is promis'd in a future Letter, this not giving the Amount, but only directing us to accept them when they appear. The 180,000 Livres is an old Debt contracted by our Army in Canada, and not for Interest of Money. What the others are I know not; and I cannot conceive what Encouragement the Congress could have had from any of us, to draw on us for any thing but that

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Interest. I suppose their Difficulties have compell'd them to it. I see we shall be distress'd here by these Proceedings: and I want to consult with you about the means of paying the Bills. If you will name an Hour when you shall be at leisure to-day, I will call upon you. I have the Honour to be, with great Respect, Sir,

B. FRANKLIN.

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882. TO JAMES HUTTON[1] (L. C.)

Passy, March 24, 1778.

MY dear old Friend was in the right, not "to call in question the Sincerity of my Words, where I say, Feb. 12th, *we can treat, if any Propositions are made to us.*" They were true then, and are so still, if Britain has not declared War with France; for in that case we shall undoubtedly think ourselves obliged to continue the War as long as she does. But methinks you should have taken us at our Word, and have sent immediately your Propositions in order to prevent such a War, if you did not choose it. Still I conceive it will be well to do it, if you have not already rashly begun the War. Assure yourself, that nobody more sincerely wishes perpetual Peace among Men than I do; but there is a prior Wish, that they would be equitable and just, otherwise such Peace is not possible, and indeed wicked Men have no right to expect it. I grieve for the Death of good Mrs. Falconer. Is there any children? Adieu. I am ever yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

[1] In answer to a letter from Hutton to Franklin, March 4, 1778 (L. C.). — ED.

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883. TO RALPH IZARD (A. P. S.)

Passy, March 30, 1778

SIR,

From the Account you give me of the Man[1] who pretends to be of Carolina, as well as from my own Observation of his Behaviour, I entertain no good Opinion of him, and shall not give him the Pass he desires.

Much and very important Business has hitherto prevented my giving you the Satisfaction you desired, but you may depend upon my endeavouring to give it you as soon as possible.[2] An answer was written to your Letter of the 5th of this Month, and sign'd by us all, w^ch^ I thought had been sent to you, till Mr. Lee inform'd me, that having communicated to you the Contents, you told him it would not be satisfactory, and desir'd it might be reconsider'd, and he had accordingly stopt it for that purpose: We have not since had an Opportunity of reconsidering it; and as the End of it is now answered by the Communication of the Treaties, perhaps it is not necessary.

I condole with you sincerely on the great Loss sustained in Charlestown by the Fire in January last, said to have destroyed 600 Houses, valued with the Goods at a Million Sterling. I have the honour to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

[1] A merchant's clerk at Livorno, who said that he was born in South Carolina, but had been so long out of it, "that he neither knows anybody there, nor does anybody know him." — ED.

[2] The same grievance is here alluded to, as in the letter of January 29th. Mr. Izard thought himself slighted by the commissioners in regard to the treaty, and particularly by Dr. Franklin, and requested an explanation. — ED.

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884. TO WILLIAM PULTENEY[1] (L. C.)

Passy, March 30, '78.

SIR,

When I first had the honour of conversing with you on the subject of Peace, I mention'd it as my Opinion, that every Proposition, which implied our voluntarily agreeing to return to a Dependance on Britain, was now become impossible; that a Peace on equal Terms undoubtedly might be made; and that, tho' we had no particular Powers to treat of Peace with England, we had general Powers to make Treaties of Peace, Amity, and Commerce, with any State in Europe, by which I thought we might be authoriz'd to treat with Britain; who, if sincerely disposed to Peace, might save time and much Bloodshed by treating with us directly.

I also gave it as my Opinion, that, in the Treaty to be made, Britain should endeavour, by the Fairness and Generosity of the Terms she offer'd, to recover the Esteem, Confidence, and Affection of America, without which the Peace could not be so beneficial, as it was not likely to be lasting; in this I had the Pleasure to find you of my Opinion.

But I see, by the Propositions you have communicated to me, that the Ministers cannot yet divest themselves of the Idea, that the Power of Parliament over us is constitutionally absolute and unlimited; and that the Limitations

[1] From a draft in L. C. in hand of W. T. Franklin. William Pulteney was a member of Parliament who had come to Paris as a secret agent from the ministry to consult Franklin respecting the terms of a reconciliation with America. He assumed while in Paris the name of Williams. — ED.

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they may be willing now to put to it by Treaty are so many Favours, or so many Benefits, for which we are to make Compensation.

As our Opinions in America are totally different, a Treaty on the Terms proposed appears to me utterly impracticable, either here or there. Here we certainly cannot make it, having not the smallest Authority to make even the Declaration specified in the proposed Letter, without which, if I understood you right, treating with us cannot be commenc'd.

I sincerely wish as much for Peace as you do, and I have enough remaining of Good Will for England to wish it for her Sake as well as for our own, and for the Sake of Humanity. In the present state of things, the proper means of obtaining it, in my Opinion, are, to acknowledge the Independence of the United States, and then enter at once into a Treaty with us for a Suspension of Arms, with the usual Provisions relating to Distances; and another for establishing Peace, Friendship, and Commerce, such as France has made. This might prevent a War between you and that Kingdom, which, in the present Circumstances and Temper of the two Nations, an Accident may bring on every Day, tho' contrary to the Interest and without the previous Intention of either. Such a Treaty we might probably now make, with the Approbation of our Friends; but, if you go to War with them on account of their Friendship for us, we are bound by Ties, stronger than can be formed by any Treaty, to fight against you with them, as long as the War against them shall continue.

May God at last grant that Wisdom to your national Councils, which he seems long to have deny'd them, and which only sincere, just, and humane Intentions can merit

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or expect. With great personal Esteem, I have the Honour to be, Sir, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

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885. TO MR. AND MRS. RICHARD BACHE (L. L.)

Passy, March 31, 1778

DEAR SON & DAUGHTER,

His Excellency, M^r^ Gérard who does me the Honour to take Charge of this Letter, goes Minister from this Court to the Congress. He is a friend to your Country and to your Father, which gives him a double Claim to your Civilities, and to every Kindness in your Power to show him. It is so long since I have heard from you, and there have been such Burnings & Devastations made by the Enemy, that I know not whether even if Philadelphia is recover'd, you have a House left to entertain him in. But I know you will do all the little in your Power to serve and oblige a Person who has and deserves your Father's highest Esteem and Affection —

Benny continues well, and minds his Learning. Temple presents his Duty. I hope soon to hear from you, and that you and yours are all as well and as hearty as

Your affectionate Father

B. FRANKLIN.

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886. TO HENRY LAURENS[1] (L. C.)

Passy, near Paris, March 31 1778.

Sir:—Mons. Gérard, who does me the Honour to be the Bearer of this Letter, is the same Plenipotentiary with whom we compleated the Treaties that have secured to America the Friendship and Support of this powerful Monarchy. In the whole Conduct of that Affair, he manifested a Candor, Uprightness, and Equity of Disposition, as well as an Affection for our Cause and Country, that impress'd us with the highest Esteem for him; and I congratulate you on his being Minister from this Court to the Congress, as the King's Appointment of a Person who is consider'd as our Friend, to fill so important a Station, is an additional Mark of his Majesty's Good Will to us, and presages, in my Opinion, an Exercise of the Good Understanding so happily begun between the two Countries; which no one can be more desirous or more capable of promoting.

I beg leave, therefore to recommend him warmly not only to all the Civilities and Respects that are due to his publick Character, but to those tender Regards and affectionate grateful Attentions that Friendship claims and which are so proper to cultivate and strengthen it. I have the Honour to be, with the greatest respect, sir, yours, etc.

B. Franklin.

[1] An auto. draft. Laurens was President of Congress.

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887. TO HENRY LAURENS (L. C.)

Passy, near Paris, March 31, 1778.

SIR,

My colleague, Mr. Deane, being recall'd by Congress, and no Reasons given that have yet appear'd here, it is apprehended to be the Effect of some Misrepresentations from an Enemy or two at Paris and at Nantes. I have no doubt, that he will be able clearly to justify himself; but, having lived intimately with him now fifteen months, the greatest part of the time in the same House, and been a constant Witness of his public Conduct, I cannot omit giving this Testimony, tho' unask'd, in his Behalf, that I esteem him a faithful, active, and able Minister, who, to my knowledge, has done in various ways great and important Service to his Country, whose Interests I wish may always, by every one in her employ, be as much and as effectually promoted.[1] With my dutiful Respects to the Congress, I have the Honour to be, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

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888. TO CONRAD ALEXANDRE GÉRARD DE RAYNEVAL (P. A. E. E. U.)

Passy, April 1, 1778.

ONCE more, dear Sir, Adieu. Mr. Deane set out last Night. He will show you the Propositions. They would probably have been accepted, if they had been made two

[1] See further correspondence concerning the quarrel between Deane and Lee, in letters to Laurens.

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Years ago. I have answer'd that they have come too late: And that every Kind of Acknowledgment of the Government of Great Britain, how small soever, is now become impracticable. I thank you for the Information of Mr. de Sartine's Courier. My best wishes attend you.

[B. FRANKLIN.]

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889. TO ARTHUR LEE (A. P. S.)

Passy, April 1. 1778.

SIR,

There is a Stile in some of your Letters, I observe it particularly in the last, whereby superior Merit is assumed to yourself in point of Care and Attention to Business, and Blame is insinuated on your Colleagues without making yourself accountable by a direct Charge, of Negligence or Unfaithfulness, which has the Appearance of being as artful as it is unkind. In the present Case I think the Insinuation groundless.

I do not know that either Mr. Deane or myself ever show'd an Unwillingness to settle the Public Accounts. The Banker's Book always contain'd the whole. You could at any time as easily have obtain'd the Account from them as either of us. And you had abundantly more Leisure. If on examining it, you had wanted Explanation of any Article, you might have call'd for it and had it. You never did either. As soon as I obtain'd the Account, I put it into your Hands, and desired you to look into it; and I have heard no more of it since, 'till now, just as Mr. Deane was on the point of departing. Mr. Deane, however, had left

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with me, before the Receipt of your Letter, both the Public Papers, and Explications of the several Articles in the Account that came within his Knowledge. With these Materials I suppose we can settle the Account whenever you please. You have only to name the Day and Place, and I will attend the Business with you. I have the Honour to be, with great Esteem, Sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

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890. FROM ARTHUR LEE TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (A. P. S.)

Chaillot, April 2, 1778.

SIR,

It was with the utmost surprise, that I learned yesterday that M. Gérard was to set out in the evening for America, in a public character, and that Mr. Deane was to accompany him, without either you or he having condescended to answer my letter of the preceding day.

That a measure of such moment, as M. Gérard's mission, should have been taken without any communication with the Commissioners is hardly credible. That, if it was communicated, you should do such violence to the authority that constituted us, together with so great an injury and injustice to me, is equally astonishing. If success to the mission, and unanimity on the subject in Congress, were your wish, with what propriety could you make it a party business, and not unite all the Commissioners in the advising and approving a measure, in which you desired their friends and constituents might be unanimous?

I do not live ten minutes' distance from you. The communication, therefore, could not be attended with delay or difficulty. Within these few days, I have seen you frequently, as usual. Particularly, on Monday I was with you at your house for some time. I asked you about the sailing of the ships at Nantes, expressing my desire to know when we should have an opportunity of writing. You said you did not know when they sailed. I asked if there were no letters, none but one from M. Dumas having been shown to me for some time. You answered, No. I had, at a former meeting, asked you whether it was not proper for us to send an express to give intelligence of such consequential events as our being acknowledged here, and the treaty avowed. You told me, it would be sufficient to write by the ship from

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Nantes, (for it was afterwards you mentioned there were two,) as the news being public would find its way fast enough.

Upon M. Amiel, who came from your house to mine, mentioning, on Tuesday, that Mr. Deane was to go away in a few days, I wrote to you and him to repeat what I have so often requested, that the public accounts might be settled, for which Mr. Deane had taken possession of all the vouchers, and that the public papers might be delivered to us before his departure. You made no answer. I sent my secretary again yesterday to desire an answer. You sent me a verbal one, that you would settle the accounts with me any day after to-morrow. Your reason for not doing it before was, that it was not your business. Now it seemed your business only, and Mr. Deane had no concern with it. The delivery of the public papers, which are the property of all, not of any one of the Commissioners, though you and Mr. Deane have constantly taken them to yourselves, was too immaterial to answer.

During all this time, and with these circumstances, you have been totally silent to me about the present opportunity of writing to Congress, about the important public measure in agitation, and about Mr. Deane's departure. Nay, more, what you have said, and the manner in which you acted, tended to mislead me from imagining that you knew of any such thing. Had you studied to deceive the most distrusted and dangerous enemy of the public, you could not have done it more effectually.

I trust, Sir, that you will think with me, that I have a right to know your reasons for treating me thus. If you have anything to accuse me of, avow it, and I will answer you. If you have not, why do you act so inconsistently with your duty to the public, and injuriously to me? Is the present state of Europe of so little moment to our constituents, as not to require our joint consideration, and information to them? Is the character of the court here, and of the person sent to negotiate with our constituents, of no consequence for them to be apprized of? Is this the example, you in your superior wisdom think proper to set, of order, decorum, confidence, and justice?

I trust too, Sir, that you will not treat this letter, as you have done many others, with the indignity of not answering it. Though I have been silent, I have not felt the less the many affronts of this kind, which you have thought proper to offer me. I have the honour to be, with great respect,

ARTHUR LEE.

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891. TO ARTHUR LEE (A. P. S.)

Passy, April 3, 1778

SIR

It is true I have omitted answering some of your Letters. I do not like to answer angry Letters. I hate Disputes. I am old, cannot have long to live, have much to do and no time for Altercation. If I have often receiv'd and borne your Magisterial Snubbings and Rebukes without Reply, ascribe it to the right Causes, my Concern for the Honour & Success of our Mission, which would be hurt by our Quarrelling, my Love of Peace, my Respect for your good Qualities, and my Pity of your Sick Mind, which is forever tormenting itself, with its Jealousies, Suspicions & Fancies that others mean you ill, wrong you, or fail in Respect for you. — If you do not cure your self of this Temper it will end in Insanity, of which it is the Symptomatick Forerunner, as I have seen in several Instances. God preserve you from so terrible an Evil: and for his sake pray suffer me to live in quiet. I have the honour to be very respectfully,

Sir, etc,

[B. FRANKLIN]

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892. TO ARTHUR LEE (A. P. S.)

Passy, April 4, 1778.

SIR,

Mr. Deane communicated to me his Intention of setting out for America immediately as a Secret, which he desired I would mention to nobody. I comply'd with his Request.

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If he did not think fit to communicate it to you also; it is from him you should demand his Reasons.

This Court has an undoubted Right to send as Ministers who it pleases, & where it pleases, without advising with us, or desiring our Approbation. The Measure of sending M. Gérard, as a Minister to Congress, was resolv'd on without consulting me, but I think it a wise one; and if I did not, I do not conceive that I have any right to find fault with it. France was not consulted when we were sent here. Your angry Charge therefore of our "making a Party Business of it" is groundless; we had no Hand in the Business: And as we neither "acted nor advis'd" in it, which you suppose, your other high-sounding Charge of our doing thereby violence to the Authority that constituted us, and a great Injury and Injustice to you, is equally without Foundation. As to the concealing it from you, Reasons were given by Mr. Deane, that appear'd to me satisfactory, and founded entirely on Views of Publick Good. I promise to communicate them to you hereafter, if you desire it, that you may have an Opportunity of refuting them if you can. At present it is not proper.

Your third Paragraph, therefore, containing a particular Account of what pass'd between you & me at my House on Monday, seems not to require any Answer. I am still of the same Opinion, that after having sent the Treaties themselves by different good Conveyances, in which Treaties our Publick Character was acknowledg'd in the most authentic Manner, and the Avowal of the Transaction by the French Ambassador to the King of England, which was in all the Papers of Europe, the sending a Vessel express to carry the News of paying our Respects to Court, w^{ch}

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was likewise in the Papers, was an Expensive and altogether unnecessary Operation.

I receiv'd your Letter directed to Mr. Deane & myself relating to the Accounts. I had no Opportunity of showing it to him till the Evening of his Departure, and then he was too much in a Hurry to peruse it. I could not therefore sooner answer it. But I then wrote an Answer acquainting you that he had put into my hands the Public Papers with all the Information he could give relating to the Accounts. It was intended to be transcribed fairly and sent you in the Morning. Your Secretary call'd for an Answer before I had time to copy it. I had a good deal of Company; and thinking a verbal Message might perhaps do as well and save the Trouble, I desired him with my Compliments to acquaint you that I was ready to settle the Account with you at any time you should think fit to appoint, except the morrow, when I should be otherwise engag'd. As this verbal Message offended you, tho' I cannot conceive why, I now send you the Letter. In it I complain of your artful and, I think I may call them unjust Insinuations. You give me fresh Instances in the Letter I am answering. You magnify your Zeal to have the Publick Accounts settled, and insinuate that Mr. Deane and I prevented it, he by "taking Possession of all the Vouchers," and both of us by taking constantly the Public Papers to ourselves, which are the Property of all the Commissioners.

When this comes to be read in the Committee, for whom it seems to be calculated, rather than for me, who know the Circumstances, what can they understand by it, but that you are the only careful, honest Man of the Three, and that we have some knavish Reasons for keeping the Accounts

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in the Dark, and you from seeing the Vouchers? But the Truth is, the Papers naturally came into Mr. Deane's Hands and mine; first as he was engag'd in the Purchasing of Goods for the Congress before either you or I came into France, next as somebody must keep the Papers, and you were either on long Journeys to Spain, to Vienna & Berlin, or had a Commission to go and reside in Spain, which it was expected would soon be executed; Mr. Deane and I liv'd almost constantly in the same House either at Paris or Passy; you separate from us, and we did most of the Business. Where then could the Papers be so properly placed as with us, who had daily Occasion to make Use of them? I never knew that you desired to have the Keeping of them. You never were refus'd a Paper or the Copy of a Paper that you desired. Why then these Reflections?

As to my not acquainting you with the Opportunity of Writing to Congress by Mr. Deane, we had lately wrote, and sent by probably safe Conveyances, all I knew of Importance to write. I therefore did not propose, nor write any Letter to the Committee by him, especially as in my Opinion, considering the Route he was to take, he would not arrive so soon as other Vessels, who may sail long after him, and he could himself give as good an Acc^{t} of our being at Court, the only Publick Transaction since our last Letters, as we could write.

You ask me, Why I act so inconsistent with my Duty to the Publick? This is a heavy Charge, Sir, which I have not deserved. But it is to the Publick, that I am accountable and not to you. I have been a Servant to many publicks, thro' a long Life; have serv'd them with Fidelity, and have been honoured by their Approbation: There is not a

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single Instance of my ever being accus'd before of acting contrary to their Interest or my Duty. I shall account to the Congress when call'd upon for this my terrible Offence of being silent to you about Mr. Deane's and M. Gérard's Departure. And I have no Doubt of their Equity in acquitting me.

It is true, that I have omitted answering some of your Letters, particularly your angry ones, in which you, with very magisterial Airs, school'd and documented me, as if I had been one of your Domestics. I saw in the strongest Light the Importance of our living in decent Civility towards each other, while our great Affairs were depending here. I saw your jealous, suspicious, malignant and quarrelsome Temper, which was daily manifesting itself against Mr. Deane, and almost every other Person you had any Concern with: I therefore pass'd your Affronts in Silence; did not answer but burnt your angry Letters, and received you when I next saw you with the same Civility, as if you had never wrote them. Perhaps I may still pursue the same Conduct, and not send you these. I believe I shall not unless exceedingly press'd by you, for of all things I hate Altercation.

One Word more about the Accounts. You tell me, that my Reason for not settling the Acc^{ts} before, was, that it was not my Business; now it seem'd my Business only, & Mr. Deane had nothing to do with it. Both these Positions are imaginary. I could never have given any such Reason, being always willing to settle Accounts with everybody, and not having the least Motive to delay or postpone the Settlement of these. Nor could it seem that I should say Mr. Deane had nothing to do with it. He had done what

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he could towards it: and being actually gone, could do no more. The Infinity of Business we have had is the true and only Reason that I know of why they have not been settled, that is, why we did not meet, sit down & compare the Vouchers with the Articles in the Banker's Account, in order to see that his Charges were supported, and that he had given us due Credit for the Monies we had put into his Hands. This I apprehend is all we have to do here. It is to the Congress we are separately to account for the separate Drafts we have made on him. This Mr. Deane can do when he arrives, having taken a Copy of the Account with him.

If you think we should account to one another for our Expences: I have no Objection, tho' I never expected it. I believe they will be found very moderate. I am sure mine will, having had only the Necessaries of Life, and purchas'd nothing besides except the *Encyclopædia*, nor sent a Sixpence' worth of any thing to my Friends or Family in America. I have the honour to be your obedient servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

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893. TO ARTHUR LEE (A. P. S.)

Passy, April 6. 1778

SIR,

Mr. Williams had Orders from Mr. Deane and myself to purchase and make up a large Quantity of Cloathing, and ship the same, in pursuance of the Orders of Congress. I imagine you were not in France when this Measure was taken, and so could not be consulted. But you certainly have been acquainted with it since your Return; I never

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heard that you made any Objection to it, and you may at any time have fuller Information if desired. I think the Orders of any two of us in these Cases are sufficient. And that if we have given Directions to an Agent of ours to draw on our Banker in Discharge of Contracts made properly for the Public Service, his Drafts ought to be honoured. The Reason of permitting him to draw on our Banker instead of ourselves, was as I understand it, convenient at that time, to mask more effectually our building & equipping Vessels of Force. If in a single Instance he is known or suspected to have abused this confidence plac'd in him, I am ready to join with you in putting a Stop to his Proceedings, by ordering his Bills to be protested. If not, I think the publick Service requires that he should compleat his Orders, which as far as I have ever heard he has hitherto executed with great Care, Fidelity & Ability.

As to the want of Funds with Mr. Grand,[1] I suppose that before the Bills drawn on him become due, which are charg'd in his Acc[t], and bring the Ballance against us, he will be fully supplied with what are necessary.

I send you herewith sundry Letters relating to our Affairs, for your Perusal and Advice upon them. I have the honour to be, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

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894. TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS (L. C.)

Passy, April 10, 1778.

SIR: — We received duly your despatch of the 3d instant, and approve very much the care and pains you constantly take

[1] Ferdinand Grand, a Paris banker. — ED.

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in sending us the best intelligence of foreign affairs. We have now the pleasure of acquainting you that Mr. John Adams, a member of Congress, appointed to succeed Mr. Deane in this Commission, is safely arrived here. He came over in the *Boston*, a frigate of thirty guns belonging to the United States. In the passage they met and made prize of a large English letter-of-marque ship of fourteen guns, the *Martha*, bound for New York, on whose cargo £70,000 sterling was insured in London. It contains abundance of necessaries for America, whither she is despatched, and we hope will get well into one of our ports.

Mr. Adams acquaints us that it had been moved in Congress to send a minister to Holland, but that although there was the best disposition towards that country, and desire to have and maintain a good understanding with their High Mightinesses and a free commerce with their subjects, the measure was respectfully postponed for the present, till their sentiments on it could be known, from an apprehension that possibly their connections with England might make the receiving an American minister as yet inconvenient, and (if Holland should have the same good will towards us) a little embarassing. Perhaps, as our independency begins to wear the appearance of greater stability since our acknowledged alliance with France, that difficulty may be lessened. Of this we wish you would take the most prudent methods privately to inform yourself. It seems clearly to be the interest of Holland to share in the rapidly growing commerce of her young sister republic; and as in the love of liberty, and bravery in the defence of it, she has been our great example, we hope circumstances and constitutions in many respects so similar may produce mutual

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benevolence; and that the unfavourable impressions made on the minds of some in America, by the rigour with which supplies of arms and ammunition were refused them in their distress, may soon be worn off and obliterated by a friendly intercourse and reciprocal good offices.

When Mr. Adams left America, which was about the middle of February, our affairs were daily improving, our troops well supplied with arms and provisions and in good order; and the army of General Burgoyne being detained for breaches of the capitulation, we had in our hands about ten thousand prisoners of the enemy. We are, sir, etc.

FRANKLIN, ADAMS, LEE

[ON A SEPARATE PAPER]

The above is so written that you may show it on Occasion. We send enclos'd a proposed Draft of a Letter to the Grand Pensionary; but as we are unacquainted with Forms, and may not exactly have hit your Idea with regard to the Matter and Expression, we wish you would consult with our Friend upon it, and return with the necessary Corrections.

P. S. The Letters you mention coming to you from England are for Mr. William Lee, and you will be so good as to forward them, with his name superscribed and enclos'd to Messrs. Frederic Gontard & Fils, Banquiers à Frankfort sur la Maine.

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895. TO THE GRAND PENSIONARY OF HOLLAND [1] (L. C.)

Paris, April 10th 1778.

Sir:—We have the Honour of acquainting your Excellency that the United States of North America being now an independent Power, and acknowledged as such by this Court, a Treaty of Amity and Commerce is compleated between France and the said States, of which we shall speedily send your Excellency a Copy, to be communicated, if you think proper, to their High Mightinesses, for whom the United States have the greatest Respect, and the strongest Desire that a good Understanding may be cultivated, and a mutually beneficial Commerce be established, between the People of the two Nations, which, as will be seen, there is nothing in the above-mentioned Treaty to prevent or impede.

We have the honour to be, with great Respect,

Your Excellency's, etc

[The Commissioners.]

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896. TO EDWARD BANCROFT [2]

Passy, April 16, 1778.

Dear Sir,

I wish you would assure our friend, that Dr. Franklin never gave any such expectations to Mr. Pulteney. On

[1] E. P. Van Berckel. The preceding letter and this enclosure exist in auto. drafts by Franklin, and a contemporary copy, in French, by Dumas, to whom the enclosure was addressed. — Ed.

[2] From "The Works of Dr. Benjamin Franklin" (Duane), Philadelphia,

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the contrary, he told him, that the Commissioners could not succeed in their mission, whether they went to recover the *dependence* or to *divide*. His opinion is confirmed by the enclosed resolves, which perhaps it may not be amiss to publish in England. Please to send me the newspaper. Yours affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

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897. FROM DAVID HARTLEY TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN[1]

Paris, April 23, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

I will take care of all your commissions. This moment a second packet of infinite value is received, which I shall cherish as a mark of affection from you. I opened the letter by mistake, which came with it, and soon saw it was not for me. I hope you will excuse it. I choose rather to throw myself upon your goodness for the excuse, than any thing else. I shall not set out till between one and two; therefore, if you will be so good as to send me another copy, I will take care of it, and deliver it safely.

God bless you, my dear friend. No exertion or endeavour on my part shall be wanting, that we may some time or other meet again in peace. Your powers are infinitely more influential than mine. To those powers I trust my last hopes. I will conclude, "Blessed are the peace-makers." Your affectionate friend,

D. HARTLEY.

P. S. If tempestuous times should come, take care of your own safety; events are uncertain, and men may be capricious.

1817, Vol. VI, p. 384. Edward Bancroft (1744–1821), naturalist, chemist, physician, and author, published (1769) "An Essay on the Natural History of Guiana," a novel entitled "Charles Wentworth" (1770), and a "Review of the Controversy between Great Britain and her Colonies" (1769). Bancroft characterized him as a double spy; Doniol says he was in the pay of the foreign office; Lord North described him as "wholly an American." Attempts have been made, but without complete success, to identify him with the mysterious "Edwards" of the secret correspondence with William Eden and the foreign office. — ED.

[1] From "The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States," Wharton, Vol. II, p. 555. — ED.

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DR. FRANKLIN'S ANSWER

I THANK you for your kind caution, but having nearly finished a long life, I set but little value on what remains of it. Like a draper, when one chaffers with him for a remnant, I am ready to say, "As it is only the fag end, I will not differ with you about it; take it for what you please." Perhaps the best use such an old fellow can be put to, is to make a martyr of him.

B. FRANKLIN.

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898. TO COMTE DE VERGENNES[1] (P. A. E. E. U.)

Passy, April 24, 1778.

SIR,

Mr. Hartley, Member of the British Parliament, an old acquaintance of mine, arrived here from London on Sunday last. He is generally in the opposition, especially on American questions, but has some respect for Lord North. In conversation, he expressed the strongest anxiety for peace with America, and appear'd extreamly desirous to know my sentiments of the terms, which might probably be acceptable if offer'd; whether America would not, to obtain peace, grant some superior Advantages in Trade to Britain, and enter into an Alliance, offensive and defensive; whether, if War should be declared against France, we had oblig'd ourselves by Treaty to join with her against England.

[1] Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes (1717–1787), Minister of Foreign Affairs (1774–1787). — ED.

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My Answers have been, that the United States were not fond of War, and with the advice of their friends would probably be easily prevailed with to make peace on equitable terms; but we had no terms committed to us to propose, and I did not choose to mention any; that Britain, having injured us heavily by making this unjust war upon us, might think herself well off, if *on Reparation of those Injuries* we admitted her to *equal* advantages with other nations in commerce; but certainly she had no reason to expect *superior;* that her known fondness for war, and the many instances of her readiness to engage in wars on frivolous occasions, were probably sufficient to cause an immediate rejection of every proposition for an *offensive* alliance with her; and that, if she made war against France on our account, a peace with us, at the same time, was impossible; for that, having met with friendship from that generous nation, when we were cruelly oppressed by England, we were under ties stronger than treaties could form, to make common cause; which we should certainly do to the utmost of our power.

Here has also been with me a Mr. Chapman, who says he is a member of the Parliament of Ireland, on his way home from Nice, where he had been for the recovery of his health. He pretended to call on me only from motives of respect for my character, &c. But, after a few compliments, he entered on a similar discourse, urging much to know what terms would satisfy America, and whether, on having *peace and independence granted* to us, we should not be willing to submit to the Navigation Act, or give equivalent privileges in trade to Britain. The purport of my answer to him was, in short, that peace was of equal

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value to England as to us, and independence we were already in possession of; that, therefore, England's offer to grant them to us could not be considered as proposing any favour, or as giving her a right to expect peculiar advantages in commerce. By his importunity, I found his visit was not so occasional as he represented it; and, from some expressions, I conjectured he might be sent by Lord Shelburne to sound me, and collect some information. On the whole, I gather from these conversations, that the opposition, as well as the ministry, are perplexed with the present situation of affairs, and know not which way to turn themselves, or whether it is best to go backward or forward, or what steps to take to extricate that nation from its present dangerous situation.

I thought it right to give your Excellency an account of these interviews, and to acquaint you with my intention of avoiding such hereafter; as I see but little prospect of utility in them, and think they are very liable to hurtful misrepresentations.

By advices from London we learn, that a fleet for Quebec, with goods valued at five hundred thousand pounds sterling, is to sail about the end of this month, under convoy only of a single frigate of thirty guns, in which is to go Governor Haldimand.[1]

Enclosed I send a paper I have just received from London. It is not subscribed by any name, but I know the hand. It is from an old friend, of general and great acquaintance, and marks strongly the present distress and

[1] Sir Frederick Haldimand (1718–1791) was appointed (April, 1778) to succeed Sir Guy Carleton as governor and commander-in-chief in Canada. — Ed.

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despair of considerate people in England. I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, your Excellency's, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

899. FROM COMTE DE VERGENNES TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (P. A. E. E. U.)

Translation

VERSAILLES, April 25, 1778.

SIR,

I have made known to the King the substance of the letter, which you did me the honour of writing to me yesterday; and I am directed by his Majesty to express to you the satisfaction he has experienced from the information, which you have communicated on your conferences with Mr. Hartley. The grand principle of the English policy has always been to excite divisions; and it is by such means she expects to sustain her empire; but it is not upon you, nor upon your colleagues, that she can practice such arts with success.

I entertain the same sentiments of confidence in the United States. As to the rest, it is impossible to speak with more dignity, frankness, and firmness than you have done to Mr. Hartley; he has no reason to be very well satisfied with his mission. I doubt whether this member of Parliament has any mission for us; but he desires to see me, and I expect him in the course of the morning. I should not be at all surprised, if his purpose be to sow distrust between us, by proposing a double negotiation. That I can obviate; but whatever passes between us, however trifling it may be, you shall be made acquainted with. I have the honour to be, with the most perfect consideration, Sir, &c. DE VERGENNES.

900. TO JOHN ROSS[1] (L. C.)

Passy, April 26, 1778.

SIR: — The multiplicity of affairs we have lately been engaged in, together with Mr. Deane's departure, who used to correspond with you, occasioned a deficiency in answering

[1] United States commercial agent at Nantes. This auto. draft is indorsed: "Letter to Mr. Jn. Ross, April 26, '78; not sent, May 19, '78." — ED.

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your letters. On looking them over I find some reflections on the Commissioners as having acted an ingenious part relative to the papers left by Mr. Thomas Morris. It appears that you have not been well informed; and therefore I would now give you the history of the transaction.

On the death of Mr. Morris, it was represented to the Commissioners that, on pretence of some kind of partnership between him and Mr. Penet, that gentleman might probably get possession of the papers, which would be attended with great inconvenience in case of any dispute on a settlement of the public accounts; and that, therefore, to prevent this, it was necessary Mr. W. Lee, the surviving colleague, should go down and take them into his custody, but, to enable him to do that, an order from government here should be obtained, directing the public officers in whose hands they regularly were, to deliver them to him; and the memorial requesting such an order was brought to Mr. Deane and me, ready drawn by Mr. A. Lee, to be signed, which we did without hesitation; I, for my part, not having the least doubt that, on receiving them, he would deliver to you those belonging to the affairs of Willing & Morris. When he returned, he gave it as the reason of his not doing so that you had quarrelled with him, used him rudely, denied his authority to meddle with the public papers, and required the whole to be delivered to you; on which he had brought the trunk containing them to Paris as he received it, sealed by two gentlemen of credit; and he desired that, to prevent reflections or suspicions, it might be opened and the papers divided in our presence. We consented to this; and I went to his house for that purpose, where Mr. Izard attended to verify the seals of the two gentlemen that were on the

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trunk. But, Mr. Deane being hindered from attending by an accident, the business was postponed; and, as I soon after understood by your letters, that Mr. Lee had had the papers under his particular examination several days before that formal sealing, of which I therefore did not see the use, and apprehending some danger of being involved in your quarrel, I refused, on consideration, to have anything to do with the opening and sorting of the papers. Mr. Lee was about to set out for Germany, and intimated that our not doing this must stop his journey. To remove this obstacle, as Mr. Deane was going to America, and Mr. A. Lee might soon go to Spain, I let him know that if he chose to leave the trunk sealed in my care, to be delivered in the same state to him or his order, I would consent to take it. He accordingly brought it to my house, with a receipt to that purpose ready written for me to sign. I signed it accordingly, and thought that might have been sufficient; but, so cautious is he, that, lest I should deny my handwriting (I suppose this reason because I cannot conceive another), he desired four persons to put their hands to the receipt as witnesses. He has, indeed, excused this since, by saying that he meant only to have it appear that those gentlemen being present approved of his delivery of the trunk to me. This might do for two of them, Mr. Deane and his brother, who, being Commissioners that with me procured for them the power of taking possession of them, had, therefore, some right to give their approbation; but the two others, Mr. Izard and Mr. Pringle, had no concern in the affair. Thus you see how the trunk comes to be in my hands, and yet not in my disposition. It is said to contain Mr. Morris' papers. I know nothing of the contents,

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and can know nothing of them, being obliged to deliver the trunk sealed as I received it, and I refused to take the key; and, apprehending Mr. Lee to be a very artful as well as disputatious man, I now wish I had not even consented to receive it. You see here the innocent part Mr. Deane and I have had in this affair, yet Mr. Lee has reflected upon us in one of his letters to me as countenancing you in treating him ill at Nantes; and you affront us as having given him our sanction for inspecting and carrying off the papers belonging to the house of Willing & Morris, but nothing is more common than to pass censures without knowing facts.

Mr. William Lee, in some conversation, expressed his opinion that a power to receive the papers ought to come from Mr. Morris' legal representative, otherwise he could not deliver them. I mention this for your information, as I suppose he will deliver them to no other person, for he is much of a lawyer, and would do everything regularly. I am, sir, your most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

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901. FROM BENJAMIN VAUGHAN TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (A. P. S.)

April 28, 1778.

MY DEAREST SIR,

I am sure I shall tell you something which you will have no pleasure in repeating again, when I inform you that L^d^ Chatham is very ill indeed. Alarming symptoms have appeared, and no likelyhood of his getting rid of them, as he grows weaker every day. This intelligence is fresh from Hayes, where he now is. As I am *afraid* this great man is dying, I think it proper to give you what *I* recollected in his short speech on the 7^th^ of April; for short it was, and appeared as the mere throwing down of the gauntlet; reserving himself wholly for reply to the Duke of Richmond. He said, he

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"Was ill, but glad he was not in his grave when he heard of giving independence. The counsel dastardly and pusillanimous. Was there no middle way? Could not be said, while country ruined by unretracted error. Was not then for making a rod to whip our own backs.

"Would never put his hands to the back of bonds for signing away America, or call princes to the Committee. America their birthright: it was once here under a prince of House of Brunswick, how came it gone? Feared there was something *rotten* near the throne: yet did not mean ministers places.

"Our case bad enough. But wished he could see daylight in the proposition. France had taken our trade our fairest flower, and it was saying to France; insult us, take all we have, but don't make war with us. Did not indeed know the means: [such as we had, we must use them:] But if we must die, would die decently. Had stood irruptions of Danes and of Normans, of Armada & Scotch rebels. Would not then extinguish and put out the glories of that throne (pointing to it.)

"Knew he should be favourably interpreted: — whatever else he was thought, should be thought sincere."

These are all the expressions that have occured to me; and if a variation was observed by others, I have inserted it. I suppose you know that the debate-writers for the newspapers, are seldom very exact: Indeed they are low people, hear indistinctly, and know neither the history of men, parties, or *opinions;* and therefore are always blundering. As to the order of sentences, it cannot be expected that I should preserve it; but I have reported as faithfully as I could. His voice was often low and did not then reach the bar. — The Duke of Richmond (who by the by is greatly improved, and will make a remarkable figure in this country, having much English stuff in him, and though not a soaring mind, yet very capable of business and detail, which he will conduct with industry, honour & courage) the Duke of Richmond I say, spoke pretty well in reply, but it was rather common-place, and what had chiefly fallen from him in former debates. There was a little harshness & sterness in it, which he cannot always keep under even to his domestics, but on the whole it was neither bitter nor formidable. — I had observed Lord Chatham shifting his crutch from one hand into the other once or twice, but did not observe that he made any exertion to get anything out of his pocket, which they tell me was the case (feeling for a handkerchief with a tug;) but on a sudden he disappeared, and was carried out of the house without sense, and like a corpse; and did not recover for almost an hour. He looked very ill at coming in at first; but did not speak so feebly as on the 30th of May 1777, when he told L.d S—— to be prepared for the worst, for he did not know what might happen. In July or August last he fell off his horse in a fit, but recovered so, as to go through much business in the beginning of the sessions. — I think about 15 or 20 voices cried out after the bustle was over, go

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on, go on; at which I was hurt; and they *told me* the Duke of Richmond spoke of being obliged to attend his militia; which is possible enough. When L^d^ Chatham was told by D^r^ Addington, that the Rockinghams said, the Duke of Richmond had killed him; "Another time" said Lord Chatham, sternly and firmly.

April 8^th^, L^d^ Shelburne came to the house and resumed the debate; and made a prodigious impression upon the Duke of Richmond; who really spoke his heart in the compliments he paid; and certainly it was a prodigious speech. Some trick and play there was in it; or as the Duke of R. called them "the honest arts of eloquence, for they were honest, he said;" — but on the whole a monstrous deal of comprehension, reading, and real solid eloquence; too rapid and sudden however to be always neat and without expletives. I shall trouble you with none of it, except what is material to you as an American and negotiator, and to save him from mis-interpretation, which has been more ignorantly than industriously used; though some of the latter kind has taken place in the *abuse* brought against him.

"Man creature of regulation; is what his government makes him. A declaration of independence would acquit America of their thinking as Englishmen; would make separate interests, competition and hatred. Already asked for Canada Florida and Scotia; and then to follow fishery and islands. Much property lost by it to individuals. A vast weapon put into hands of congress; soon make minority into majority. Would now give it *for nothing;* for nothing said in return to the offer, but that they won't thank you for it. Not a child's play with diadems, to toss away a diadem, and hope to have it back again improved. Many of congress-men wished to serve their community; those of elevated minds would wish (as they ought,) to have elevated stations. Was sure however the union would be again; and the name of Englishmen last, when that of France was rotten. France meant to dupe one and hurt both. — Now thirteen republics; republics peaceful: would pay their first quotas easily, as in the scrip, but third and fourth payments would drag heavily. Prince Maurice built a citadel at Groningen to inforce payment of quotas. (Here he said somthing about an agrarian law being as natural to a republic, as entails to a monarchy; but I forget the application.)

"Wished none of the commissioners sent: if sent, sent with view to be refused. Ought to do like bungling physicians: after trying many things, try nothing; see what nature would do; nature enough in this case. Leave them alone: they will soon find what they have lost, and in two or three years be for sending commissioners here.

"As to France & Spain must not despair: England had her same people, same private wealth, if properly taken care of and confidence to draw it forth from its hoardings. If we grown old, France grown old too. France & Spain vulnerable & etc.

"Though Lords dispond, those who know frivolousness of French won't

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dispond, not women even, who do know it. France had great individuals, so had falling Rome; but nation refined in nothing but in the art of making court; this the view of all.

"Rupture with France not instant; long seen; why then surprised; why not so before? Had low spirits at times himself; men in dispondence he knew had not right judgments. We must appeal to the public; call out religion and freedom; give men something to fight for; (the present a war of slavery;) and follow a directing public.

"In 1672 Holland in a worse state; & offered to submit to Lewis and only Amsterdam firm. De Witz, like all other great men, failed in not knowing the extent of folly; never thought Charles would let them go; yet Charles did. But still De Witz's maxim was, no country ought ever to give up one point of justice or reason, but oppose it from first. De Witz not only said, but did; visited the fleet, made infinite exertions, and was torn in pieces repeating the ode *Justum and tenacem propositi* &c.

"Not true that Philip and Elisabeth accommodated to each other. As fast as one assisted Holland, the other assisted Ireland; and Armada was *forced* to delay, because Walsingham Gresham & Lutton borrowed Genoese bank money that was to arm it. Here was stock-jobbing, and yet cost only £40,000. Wished these times produced a Walsingham, and merchants like Gresham. Yet still some spirit to his knowledge and did not speak of mountains and mice.

"If this point given up, should be ashamed of London, still more of abroad; believed should retire to the country. If danger followed him, would do as a traveller would, who found himself at a tavern where a company of gentlemen were attacked by ruffians; without interest, would take his share.

"But am asked a question: Must we fight all three? Will answer distinctly; think need only fight two of them, but if necessary yes, fight the three.

"On the whole, wished not to be replied to on the spot; begged them (the Rockinghams) to take time, and weigh. He knew their worth. His opinions not court opinions: but respected their unspotted characters, and hoped *their* good intentions would not aid the little cunning of others to ruin the country. Should unite against ministers: Not to reap seed of *their* sowing, but have reaping of seed of their own sowing."

Then followed a great variety of other matters relative to ministry and their conduct.

He spoke two hours, besides a reply; and was not flat for a moment. In his beginnings he is often flat, for 5 or 6 minutes, though *wonderfully* improved.

He explained the expression of Lord Chatham's not knowing the means. — But I wonder the Duke of R. did not talk of the instance of irruptions by Danes & Normans, as contrary to the case to be proved. Indeed the Danes were finally repelled and Norman line compromised, and in each case the

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Kings were obliged to reside in their conquests; but the instances certainly very awkward.

No news that I can communicate. The King & Queen will be at Portsmouth on Friday. The Irish bills of course will not pass, ministry not being with them. Gov^r. Johnstone had great hopes at going out, but they have just heard here that America is not much inclined to negotiation, they say. I think they tell us Mr. Hartly makes the 20^th^ embassador you have had. I am very glad the first time I saw my friend, that I had *no* connections; and the second time that I scarcely shewed an inclination to *hear* what, if I had been sent by my connections, I *ought* to have heard.

I think if Lord Chatham had remained well, that a change of ministers would not have been distant; for they know that he minds measures more than men, and rather has a turn to take care of national grandeur than national liberty, farther than as the latter assists the former; all which is in a great degree true. Under him therefore they thought they could pension their creatures with sinecure places, leaving him the general direction.

Upon a conversation this morning with Col^l. B., I find that absentees will at first be just as safe as inhabitants, personal care and exertion excepted; and therefore content myself with getting a letter to *our* governor, strongly desiring him to recommend our property to protection of the conqueror, which recommendation he knows by experience will be attended to. But as I wish to have two securities where I think them possible, I shall beg the favour of you to get the same thing mentioned to the parties concerned on your side, if you think it proper; but as you may not think it proper, to make the refusal easy, and to prevent improper communication being, I hope you will never mention to me in *any* way, the part you may take. Our parish is that of St. James; I have a brother named Charles on the spot. As to our connections, they are rank Whig and American. I know you have nobleness enough to excuse this application, and consider it as not made wholly on my part, but for the family. I am as ever, my dearest sir, your most devoted, affectionate & grateful . . .

D^r. P. & D^r. P^y.[1] Have had a correspondence
upon the latter's metaphysical
writings, which will probably be
soon published, unless the distraction of the times
should withdraw attention to such subjects
I have had some papers for the Duke De——
by me, but they are still in their old state, and I
have not had leisure to prepare them for him.—

I dare say you have many such voluminous correspondents as myself: but you see how my pen runs to you.

[1] Richard Price and Joseph Priestley.

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902. TO ARTHUR LEE (A. P. S.)

Passy, May 17, 1778.

Mr. Franklin is not inclin'd to sign this Letter to Mr. Grand,[1] 1. because he does not know, that any Inconveniencies have arisen from the Order originally given that the Orders of each of us separately should be honoured.

2. Because Mr. Lee is pleas'd to be very angry with him, which is express'd in many of his Letters, and therefore Mr. F. does not chuse to be oblig'd to ask Mr. Lee's Consent, whenever he may have Occasion to draw for his Subsistence, as that Consent cannot be expected from any Necessity of a reciprocal Compliance on Mr. F.'s part, Mr. Lee having secur'd his Subsistence by taking into his own Disposition 185,000 Livres, and his Brother, by a Deception on the Commissioners, of 48,000.[2] Mr. F. has no Objection to any Resolution that all Contracts for the Publick shall be made by joint Consent, or at least by a Majority, together with the Drafts for Payment. Indeed he wishes that if practicable he might be excus'd from any Concern in Matters of Commerce, which he so little understands. But as we are separately accountable to Congress for our personal Expences,

[1] The following is a copy of the letter to Mr. Grand, the American banker, which Mr. Lee requested Dr. Franklin to sign.

"Sir; It is our desire, that you accept no bills nor pay any money out of the funds which are or may be in your hands to the credit of us three jointly without our joint order. As it has been the practice to address Letters upon the business of the Commission to Mr. Deane, we desire that you will send to us all the Letters you receive so directed, & not give them to any private person." May 17, 1778 (A. P. S.). — Ed.

[2] This "deception," as it is here called, is explained in the letter to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, dated January 15, 1779. — Ed.

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and Mr. F. does not desire to have the least Controll in those of his Colleagues, so neither does he chuse to subject his to the Controll of Mr. Lee.

3. He declines signing this Letter, because it orders Mr. Grand to deliver to us all Letters directed to Mr. Deane, which may come into his hands: and it being understood that Dr. Bancroft is intrusted & empower'd by Mr. Deane to receive his Letters, and there may be some concerning his private Affairs with which we have no Concern, and which it may be improper for us to examine, Mr. F. thinks that the Supposition of a Possibility, that they may relate to the Publick, is not a sufficient Excuse for such Gratification of private Curiosity. I have the honour to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

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903. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S. W.)

Passy, May 25 1778

DEAR SIR, I am glad to learn by the Newspapers that you got safe home, where I hope you found all well.

I wish to know whether your Ministers have yet come to a Resolution to exchange the Prisoners they hold in England, according to the Expectations formerly given you. We have here about two hundred, who are confin'd in the Drake, where they must be kept, as we have not the Use of Prisons on shore, and where they could not be so conveniently accommodated as we could wish. But as the liberal Discharge we have given to near 500 Prisoners taken on your Coasts has wrought no Disposition to similar Returns, we shall keep these and all we take hereafter, till your Counsels become

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more reasonable. We have Accounts from the Mill Prison at Plymouth, that our People are not allowed the Use of Pen and Ink, nor the Sight of Newspapers, nor the Conversation of Friends. Is it true?

Be so good as to mention to me whether the two little Bills I gave you on Nesbit and Vaughan are accepted and paid, and the Sums of each, as I have omitted to make a Note of them. Permit me to repeat my thankful Acknowledgments for the very humane and kind part you have acted in this Affair. If I thought it necessary I would pray God to bless you for it. But I know he will do it without my Prayers. Adieu, and believe me ever,

Yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

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904. TO JOHN PAUL JONES[1]

Passy, May 27. 1778.

DEAR SIR,

I received yours of the 18th, enclosing one for the Countess of Selkirk, which I forward this day by way of Holland, as you desire. It is a gallant letter, and must give her Ladyship a high and just opinion of your generosity and nobleness of mind.

The Jersey privateers do us a great deal of mischief by intercepting our supplies. It has been mentioned to me, that

[1] First printed by Sparks. This letter was answered by Paul Jones (Brest, June 1, 1778). He was then captain of U. S. S. *Ranger*, a vessel which he calls "crank and slow." He thought that her present crew could only be led by "great views of interest" to "bring about the plan" proposed in Franklin's letter. [See J. P. Jones Mss., L. C., and Sherburne, "Life of John Paul Jones," New York, 1851, p. 68]. — ED.

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your small vessel, commanded by so brave an officer, might render great service by following them where greater ships dare not venture their bottoms; or, being accompanied and supported by some frigates from Brest, at a proper distance, might draw them out, and then take them. I wish you to consider of this, as it comes from high authority, and that you would immediately let me know what you think of it, and when your ship will be ready.

I have written to England about the exchange of your prisoners. I congratulate you most cordially on your late success, and wish for a continuance and increase of the honour you have acquired. It will always be a pleasure to me to contribute what may lie in my power towards your advancement, and that of the brave officers and men under your command. I am, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

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905. TO JOHN PAUL JONES[1]

Passy, June 1, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

I have the pleasure of informing you, that it is proposed to give you the command of the great ship we have built at Amsterdam.[2] By what you wrote to us formerly, I have ventured to say in your behalf, that this proposition would be agreeable to you. You will immediately let me know your resolution; which, that you may be more clear in taking, I must inform you of some circumstances. She is at present the property of the King; but, as there is no war yet declared, you will have the commission and flag of the United States,

[1] First printed by Sparks. — ED.

[2] *Indien.* — ED.

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and act under their orders and laws. The *Prince de Nassau* will make the cruise with you. She is to be brought here under cover as a French merchantman, to be equipped and manned in France. We hope to exchange your prisoners for as many American sailors; but, if that fails, you have your present crew to be made up here with other nations and French.

The other Commissioners are not acquainted with this proposition as yet, and you see, by the nature of it, that it is necessary to be kept a secret, till we have got the vessel here, for fear of difficulties in Holland, and interruption. You will therefore direct your answer to me alone, it being desired, that, at present, the affair rest between you and me. Perhaps it may be best for you to take a trip up here to concert matters, if in general you approve the idea.

I was much pleased with reading your journal, which we received yesterday. I am, &c.

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906. TO JOHN PAUL JONES (L. C.)

Passy, June 10, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

I receiv'd yours of the first Instant with the Papers enclos'd, which I have shown to the other Commissioners; but have not yet had their Opinion of them. I only know, that they had before (in Consideration of the Disposition and Uneasiness of your People) express'd an Inclination to order your Ship directly back to America. You will judge from what follows, whether it would not be adviseable *for you to propose*

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their sending her back with her People, and under some other Command.

In consequence of the high Opinion the Minister of the Marine [1] has of your Conduct and Bravery, it is now settled (observe, that this is to be a Secret between us, I being expressly enjoin'd not to communicate it to any other Person, not even to the other Gentlemen,) that you are to have the Frigate from Holland, which actually belongs to Government, and will be furnished with as many good French Seamen as you shall require. But you are to act under Congress' commission. As you may like to have a Number of Americans, and your own are homesick, it is proposed to give you as many as you can engage out of two hundred Prisoners, which the Ministry of Britain have at length agreed to give us in Exchange for those you have in your hands. They propose to make the exchange at Calais, where they are to bring the Americans. Nothing is wanting to this, but a List of yours, containing their Names and Rank; immediately on the Receipt of which, an equal Number are to be prepared and sent in a ship to that Port, where yours are to meet them. Pray send this List by the Return of the Post if possible. If by this means you can get a good new Crew, I think it will be best that you are quite free of the old, for a Mixture might introduce the Infection of that Sickness you complain of. But this may be left to your Discretion.

Perhaps we shall join you with the *Providence*, Captain Whipple, a new Continental Ship of 30 Guns, which in coming out of the river of Providence gave the two frigates that were posted to intercept her each of them so heavy a Dose of her 18 and 12 pounders, that they had not the courage, or were

[1] M. de Sartine. — Ed.

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not able, to pursue her. The *Boston* is suppos'd to be gone from Bordeaux.

It seems to be desired by those concern'd in your future Ship that you should step up to Versailles, (where one will meet you,) in order to such a Settlement of Matters and Plans with those who have the Direction, as cannot well be done by Letter. I wish it may be convenient to you to do it directly. The project of giving you the Command of this Ship pleases me the more, as it is a probable Opening to the higher Preferment you so justly merit. I have the honour to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

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907. TO GEORGELIN DU COSQUER [1]

Passy, ce [11 Juin 1778.]

Personne, Monsieur, ne doit estre, et n'est effectivement plus attaché que moy aux français, et je ne puis que vous louer du désir que vous avez de leur estre utile, vous leur rendriez effectivement un signalé service en établissant chez eux un moyen de diminuer et d'abréger les procès que je regarde comme un des plus grands fléaux de la Société, mais le peu de connoissance que j'ay de vos lois civiles et des dispositions de votre nation à cet égard ne me permet pas d'aprecier celuy que vous proposez; quoy je ne mérite pas, Monsieur, la confiance que vous me témoignez, je sens com-

[1] "Correspondant des Etats de Bretagne et de la Société d'Agriculture." He had written to Franklin in terms of high and warm eulogy as to "the Lycurgus of the new Sparta," and enclosed a project which he called "Moyen de prévenir, ou au moins simplifier les Proces, par des essais de conciliation." To this communication the above letter is Franklin's reply. — ED.

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bien elle m'honore et je vous prie de recevoir les assurances de l'estime avec laquelle je suis,

Monsieur,
votre très humble
et très obeissant
serviteur.
[B. FRANKLIN.]

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908. TO DAVID HARTLEY (L. C.)

Passy near Paris June 16, 1778.

SIR: — I receiv'd yours of the 5th Instant acquainting us that the Ministers have at length agreed to an Exchange of Prisoners. We shall write to Capt. Jones for the List required, which will be sent you as soon as receiv'd. I understand there are at least two hundred. We desire and expect that the Number of ours shall be taken from Forton and Plymouth, in Proportion to the Number in each Place, and to consist of those who have been longest in Confinement, it being not only equitable that they should be first reliev'd but this Method will prevent all suspicion that you pick out the worst and weakest of our People, to give in exchange for your good Ones. If you think proper to clear your Prisons at once, and give us all our People, we give you our solemn Engagement, which we are sure will be punctually executed, to deliver to Lord Howe in America, or his Order, a Number of your Sailors equal to the Surplus, as soon as the Agreement arrives there.

There is one Thing more which we desire may be observ'd. We shall note in our List the Names and Number of those

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taken in the Service of the King, distinguishing them from those taken in the Merchant Service; that in the Exchange to be made you may give adequate Numbers of those taken in the Service of the States, and of our Merchants. This will prevent any Uneasiness among both your Navy men and ours, if the Seamen of Merchant Ships are exchang'd before them. As it will be very troublesome and expensive, as well as fatiguing to them, to march your people from Brest to Calais, we may endeavour to get leave for your Ship to come to the Road of Brest to receive them there; or, if that cannot be, we must desire from your Admiralty a Passport for the Ship that is to convey them from Brest to Calais. If you have any of our people still Prisoners on board your Ships of war, we request that they may be put into the Prisons, to take their Chance of Exchange with the rest.

I am, Dear Sir
Your affectionate Friend
& most obedient Serv[t]
B. F.

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909. TO JAMES HUTTON (L. C.)

Passy, June 23, 1778.

My dear old Friend has here the Paper he desired.[1] We have had a marble Monument made at Paris for the brave General Montgomery, which is gone to America.[2] If it

[1] Passport for a vessel, which was about to be sent to the Moravian missionaries on the coast of Labrador. — ED.

[2] The memorial in marble, made by Caffieri, was erected, by the desire of Congress, in St. Paul's Episcopal Church, New York, "to transmit to future ages" the "patriotic conduct, enterprise and prowess" of Major-general Richard Montgomery (1736–1775) who fell at Quebec. — ED.

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should fall into the Hands of any of your Cruizers, I expect you will exert yourself to get it restor'd to us, because I know the generosity of your Temper, which likes to do handsome Things, as well as to make Returns. You see we are unwilling to *rob the Hospital;* we hope your People will be found as averse to *pillaging the Dead.* Adieu. Yours,

B. FRANKLIN.

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910. TO CAPTAIN SAINNEVILLE (A. P. S.)

Passy, June 23, 1778

SIR,

I have just received safe the several Letters & Packets you did me the Honour of forwarding to me. Please to accept my thankful Acknowledgements for your kind Care of them. They speak of you with great Regard, and express some Concern that our People had it not more in their Power to manifest their Respect for your Person and Affection for your Nation. With great Esteem I have the honour to be

Sir

Your most obed^{t} hum Serv$_{t}$

B. F.

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911. TO A. BOREL [1] (A. P. S.)

Passy, June 24. 1778

SIR,

On reading again the Prospectus & Explanation of your intended Print, I find the whole Merit of giving Freedom to

[1] This letter exists also in L. C., where it is a copy in French. It has hitherto been printed as to an unknown engraver in Paris. The identification of the engraver was established by Mr. Worthington C. Ford. The engraving is described in the Hampton L. Carson "Catalogue," Vol. II, No. 1764. — ED.

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America, continues to be ascrib'd to me, which, as I told you in our first Conversation, I could by no means approve of, as it would be unjust to the Numbers of wise and brave Men, who by their Arms & Counsels, have shared in the Enterprize, & contributed to its Success, (as far as it has yet succeeded) at the Hazard of their Lives & Fortunes.

My Proposition to you was, and continues to be, that instead of naming me in particular, in the Explanation of the Print, it should be said, *The Congress, represented by a Senator in Roman Dress, &c.* As it stands, I cannot consent to accept the Honour you propose to do me by dedicating the Print to me, which I understand is in this Country considered as an Approbation. And in my own Country, it would hurt my Character and Usefulness if I were to give the least Countenance to such a Pretention, by recommending or promoting the Sale of a Print so explain'd. Upon these Considerations I must request that if you are determin'd to proceed in the Engraving, you would in a new Prospectus, change the Explanation, as above propos'd, and dedicate the Print not to me, but to the Congress. I have the Honour to be, Sir, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

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912. PROPOSED LETTER TO LORD NORTH CONCERNING PRISONERS

June, 1778.

MY LORD: — The fortune of war having again made a number of British seamen prisoners to the United States, it is our duty to trouble you with a renewal of our former request for an immediate exchange of prisoners in Europe. To detain unfortunate men for months in prison and send

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them three thousand miles to make an exchange which might take place immediately and on the spot is a most grievous and unnecessary addition to the calamities of war, in which we cannot believe the British government will persist.

It is with the utmost regret that we find ourselves compelled to reiterate to your Lordship our remonstrances against your treating the citizens of the United States, made prisoners by the arms of the king of Great Britain, in a manner unexampled in the practice of civilized nations. We have received late and authentic information that numbers of such prisoners, some of them fathers of families in America, having been sent to Africa, are now in the fort of Senegal, condemned in that unwholesome climate to the hardest labour and most inhuman treatment.

It will be our indispensable duty to report this to the Congress of the United States, and retaliation will be the inevitable consequence in Europe as well as in America, unless your Lordship will authorize us to assure Congress that those unhappy men, as well as all others of our nation who have been treated in a similar manner shall be immediately brought back and exchanged.

Most earnestly we beseech your Lordship no longer to sacrifice the essential interests of humanity to claims of sovereignty, [of which the issue of our most solemn appeal to Heaven has sufficiently proved. It is a fatal mistake, by which you seem to have been misled, to think that when you trampled upon humanity you triumphed too over us] which your experience must by this time have convinced you are not to be maintained. We have the honour to be, etc.

[B. F. for the Commissioners]

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913. TO CHARLES DE WEISSENSTEIN[1] (P. A. E. E. U.)

Passy, July 1, 1778.

SIR,

I received your letter, dated at Brussels the 16th past. My vanity might possibly be flattered by your expressions of compliment to my understanding, if your *proposals* did not more clearly manifest a mean opinion of it.

You conjure me, in the name of the omniscient and just God, before whom I must appear, and by my hopes of future fame, to consider if some expedient cannot be found to put a stop to the desolation of America, and prevent the miseries of a general war. As I am conscious of having taken every step in my power to prevent the breach, and no one to widen it, I can appear cheerfully before that God, fearing nothing from his justice in this particular, though I have much occasion for his mercy in many others. As to my future fame, I am content to rest it on my past and present conduct, without seeking an addition to it in the crooked, dark paths, you propose to me, where I should most certainly lose it. This your solemn address would therefore have been more properly made to your sovereign and his venal Parliament. He and they, who wickedly began, and madly continue, a war

[1] Franklin received a long letter signed Charles de Weissenstein. It was dated "Brussels, June 16, 1778," and written in English. The original is now in P. A. E., and is addressed "To Benj. Franklin Esq. &c. &c.

Secret and Confidential
Read this in private — & before you look
at the other papers —

but don't be imprudent enough to let any one see it, before you have consider'd it thoroughly."

The letter contained a "Plan of Reconciliation" and the Outline of the Future Government in America, and urged a secret conference. — ED.

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for the desolation of America, are alone accountable for the consequences.

You endeavour to impress me with a bad opinion of French faith; but the instances of their friendly endeavours to serve a race of weak princes, who, by their own imprudence, defeated every attempt to promote their interest, weigh but little with me, when I consider the steady friendship of France to the Thirteen United States of Switzerland, which has now continued inviolate two hundred years. You tell me, that she will certainly cheat us, and that she despises us already. I do not believe that she will cheat us, and I am not certain that she despises us; but I see clearly that you are endeavouring to cheat us by your conciliatory bills; that you actually despised our understandings, when you flattered yourselves those artifices would succeed; and that not only France, but all Europe, yourselves included, most certainly and for ever would despise us, if we were weak enough to accept your insidious propositions.

Our expectations of the future grandeur of America are not so magnificent, and therefore not so vain or visionary, as you represent them to be. The body of our people are not merchants, but humble husbandmen, who delight in the cultivation of their lands, which, from their fertility and the variety of our climates, are capable of furnishing all the necessaries and conveniences of life without external commerce; and we have too much land to have the least temptation to extend our territory by conquest from peaceable neighbours, as well as too much justice to think of it. Our militia, you find by experience, are sufficient to defend our lands from invasion; and the commerce with us will be defended by all the nations who find an advantage in it. We, therefore,

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have not the occasion you imagine, of fleets or standing armies, but may leave those expensive machines to be maintained for the pomp of princes, and the wealth of ancient states. We propose, if possible, to live in peace with all mankind; and after you have been convinced, to your cost, that there is nothing to be got by attacking us, we have reason to hope, that no other power will judge it prudent to quarrel with us, lest they divert us from our own quiet industry, and turn us into corsairs preying upon theirs. The weight therefore of an independent empire, which you seem certain of our inability to bear, will not be so great as you imagine. The expense of our civil government we have always borne, and can easily bear, because it is small. A virtuous and laborious people may be cheaply governed. Determining, as we do, to have no offices of profit, nor any sinecures or useless appointments, so common in ancient or corrupted states, we can govern ourselves a year, for the sum you pay in a single department, or for what one jobbing contractor, by the favour of a minister, can cheat you out of in a single article.

You think we flatter ourselves, and are deceived into an opinion that England *must* acknowledge our independency. We, on the other hand, think you flatter yourselves in imagining such an acknowledgment a vast boon, which we strongly desire, and which you may gain some great advantage by granting or withholding. We have never asked it of you; we only tell you, that you can have no treaty with us but as an independent state; and you may please yourselves and your children with the rattle of your right to govern us, as long as you have done with that of your King's being King of France, without giving us the least concern, if you do not attempt to exercise it. That this pretended right is indisputable, as you

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say, we utterly deny. Your Parliament never had a right to govern us, and your King has forfeited it by his bloody tyranny. But I thank you for letting me know a little of your mind, that, even if the Parliament should acknowledge our independency, the act would not be binding to posterity, and that your nation would resume and prosecute the claim as soon as they found it convenient from the influence of your passions, and your present malice against us. We suspected before, that you would not be actually bound by your conciliatory acts, longer than till they had served their purpose of inducing us to disband our forces; but we were not certain, that you were knaves by principle, and that we ought not to have the least confidence in your offers, promises, or treaties, though confirmed by Parliament.

I now indeed recollect my being informed, long since, when in England, that a certain very great personage, then young, studied much a certain book, called *Arcana Imperii*.[1] I had the curiosity to procure the book and read it. There are sensible and good things in it, but some bad ones; for, if I remember rightly, a particular king is applauded for his politically exciting a rebellion among his subjects, at a time when they had not strength to support it, that he might, in subduing them, take away their privileges, which were troublesome to him; and a question is formally stated and discussed, *Whether a prince, who, to appease a revolt, makes promises of indemnity to the revolters, is obliged to fulfil those promises.* Honest and good men would say, Ay; but this politician says, as you say, No. And he gives this pretty

[1] "Arcana imperii detecta: or, divers select cases in Government," etc. London, 1701 [a translation of "Disquisitiones politicae" of Mark Zuirius Boxhorn]. — ED.

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reason, that, though it was right to make the promises, because otherwise the revolt would not be suppressed, yet it would be wrong to keep them, because revolters ought to be punished to deter from future revolts.

If these are the principles of your nation, no confidence can be placed in you; it is in vain to treat with you; and the wars can only end in being reduced to an utter inability of continuing them.

One main drift of your letter seems to be, to impress me with an idea of your own impartiality, by just censures of your ministers and measures, and to draw from me propositions of peace, or approbations of those you have enclosed to me which you intimate may by your means be conveyed to the King directly, without the intervention of those ministers. You would have me give them to, or drop them for, a stranger, whom I may find next Monday in the church of Notre Dame, to be known by a rose in his hat. You yourself, Sir, are quite unknown to me; you have not trusted me with your true name. Our taking the least step towards a treaty with England through you, might, if you are an enemy, be made use of to ruin us with our new and good friends. I may be indiscreet enough in many things; but certainly, if I were disposed to make propositions (which I cannot do, having none committed to me to make), I should never think of delivering them to the Lord knows who, to be carried to the Lord knows where, to serve no one knows what purposes. Being at this time one of the most remarkable figures in Paris, even my appearance in the church of Notre Dame, where I cannot have any conceivable business, and especially being seen to leave or drop any letter to any person there, would be a matter of some speculation, and might, from the suspicions it must naturally give, have very mischievous consequences to our credit here.

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The very proposing of a correspondence so to be managed, in a manner not necessary where fair dealing is intended, gives just reason to suppose you intend the contrary. Besides, as your court has sent Commissioners to treat with the Congress, with all the powers that could be given them by the crown under the act of Parliament, what good purpose can be served by privately obtaining propositions from us? Before those Commissioners went, we might have treated in virtue of our general powers, (with the knowledge, advice, and approbation of our friends), upon any propositions made to us. But, under the present circumstances, for us to make propositions, while a treaty is supposed to be actually on foot with the Congress, would be extremely improper, highly presumptuous with regard to our constituents, and answer no good end whatever.

I write this letter to you, notwithstanding; (which I think I can convey in a less mysterious manner, and guess it may come to your hands;) I write it because I would let you know our sense of your procedure, which appears as insidious as that of your conciliatory bills. Your true way to obtain peace, if your ministers desire it, is, to propose openly to the Congress fair and equal terms, and you may possibly come sooner to such a resolution, when you find, that personal flatteries, general cajolings, and panegyrics on our *virtue* and *wisdom* are not likely to have the effect you seem to expect; the persuading us to act basely and foolishly, in betraying our country and posterity into the hands of our most bitter enemies, giving up or selling our arms and warlike stores, dismissing our ships of war and troops, and putting those enemies in possession of our forts and ports.

This proposition of delivering ourselves, bound and gagged,

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ready for hanging, without even a right to complain, and without a friend to be found afterwards among all mankind, you would have us embrace upon the faith of an act of Parliament! Good God! an act of your Parliament! This demonstrates that you do not yet know us, and that you fancy we do not know you; but it is not merely this flimsy faith, that we are to act upon; you offer us *hope*, the hope of PLACES, PENSIONS, and PEERAGES. These, judging from yourselves, you think are motives irresistible. This offer to corrupt us, Sir, is with me your credential, and convinces me that you are not a private volunteer in your application. It bears the stamp of British court character. It is even the signature of your King. But think for a moment in what light it must be viewed in America. By PLACES, you mean places among us, for you take care by a special article to secure your own to yourselves. We must then pay the salaries in order to enrich ourselves with these places. But you will give us PENSIONS, probably to be paid too out of your expected American revenue, and which none of us can accept without deserving, and perhaps obtaining, a SUS-*pension*. PEERAGES! alas! Sir, our long observation of the vast servile majority of your peers, voting constantly for every measure proposed by a minister, however weak or wicked, leaves us small respect for that title. We consider it as a sort of *tar-and-feather* honour, or a mixture of foulness and folly, which every man among us, who should accept it from your King, would be obliged to renounce, or exchange for that conferred by the mobs of their own country, or wear it with everlasting infamy. I am, Sir, your humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

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914. TO FERDINAND GRAND[1] (P. A. E. E. U.)

Le 3. Juillet 1778.

Mr. franklin presente ses respects à Mr. Grand et il lui envoye la lettre originale dont il lui a parlé. Dans une autre Mr. Bingham[2] dit que le plus leger pretexte suffit aujourd'hui aux Anglois pour saisir et condamner les effets des marchands françois qui ne peuvent pas meme transporter les productions d'Amerique d'une Isle à une autre sans courir les plus grands risques. En effet plusieurs Vaisseaux ont été conduite depuis peu à la Dominique par la seule raison qu'ils transporteient des productions d'Amerique. Il est à remarques qu'avant ces difficultés les marchands francais pouvient acheter du tabac du oriz &c., des Americains du Continent pour etre transportés en france. Si je ne me trompe il est porte dans les traités que le Vaisseau d'un ami assure les marchandiser meme d'un ennemi à plus forte raison dit il garantir vos propres marchandise qui vous avez achetées au par avant de cet ennemi.

Mr Bingham dit aussi que la Cour d'Amirauté à la Dominique est constituée sur des principes si iniques qu'elle encourage les condamnations, le juge ayant une portion des marchandises condamnées desorte qu'on ne peut gueres se flatter de sauver des effets dont le sort dépend de son jugement.

[B. F.]

[1] F. Grand was a Swiss Protestant residing in Paris. He was a brother of Sir George Grand. Through the influence of Le Ray de Chaumont he became the banker to the American ministers. — Ed.

[2] U. S. Commercial Agent at Martinique. — Ed.

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915. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S. W.) (L. C.)

Passy, July 13, 1778.

DEAR SIR: — Inclosed is the List of our Prisoners, which by an Accident was long in coming to us. There are supposed to be about 15 more remaining in the Hospital, whose Names we have not yet obtained, and about as many who being recovered of their Wounds have been suffered to go home to England. If you continue in the opinion of making the Exchange at Calais, you will send us the Papers necessary to secure the Vessel that shall transport the Men from the Ports where they are to that Place against Capture; as the Marching them thither would be attended with great Inconveniences, and many of them might desert on the way, from an Apprehension of being put on board Men-of-War on their arrival in England.

B. FRANKLIN.

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916. TO JAMES LOVELL [1] (U. OF P.)

Passy, July 22. 1778.

SIR,

I received your favour of May 15th, and was glad to find, that mine of December 25th had come to hand. Mr. Deane's brother writes it was not signed, which was an accidental omission. Mr. Deane is himself I hope with you long before this time, and I doubt not every prejudice against

[1] Only a portion of this letter is in U. of P. The whole letter is printed in Sparks, "The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution," Vol. III, p. 52. — ED.

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him is removed. It was not alone upon the proceedings of Congress, that I formed my opinion that such prejudices existed. I am glad to understand that opinion was groundless, and that he is likely to come back with honour in the commission to Holland, where matters are already so ripe for his operations, that he cannot fail (with his abilities) of being useful.

You mention former letters of the Committee, by which we might have seen the apprehensions of the resentment of foreign officers, &c. Those letters never came to hand. And we, on our part, are amazed to hear, that the Committee had had no line from us for near a year, during which we had written, I believe, five or six long and particular letters, and had made it a rule to send triplicates of each, and to replace those that we happened to hear were lost, so that of some there were five copies sent; and, as I hear that Captain Young is arrived, who had some of them, I think it probable that one of each, at least, must have come to your hands before this time. Mr. Deane's information, however, may supply the want of them, whose arrival, as he went with a strong squadron of men-of-war, is more likely than that of this vessel, or any other single one by which we might send more copies.

The affair with M. de Beaumarchais will be best settled by his assistance after his return. We find it recommended to us, but we know too little of it to be able to do it well without him.

There has been some inaccuracy in sending us the last despatches of the Committee. Two copies of the contract with M. Francy, and the invoices, came by the same vessel, Captain Niles. And though one of your letters mentions

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sending enclosed a resolution of Congress relative to two articles of the treaty, that resolution is not come to hand. There are circumstances in the affair of those articles, that make them, in my opinion, of no consequence if they stand, while the proposing to abrogate them has an unpleasing appearance, as it looks like a desire of having it in our power to make that commercial kind of war, which no honest State can begin, which no good friend or neighbour ever did or will begin, which has always been considered as an act of hostility, that provoked as well as justified reprisals, and has generally produced such as rendered the first project as unprofitable as it was unjust.

Commerce among nations, as well as between private persons, should be fair and equitable, by equivalent exchanges and mutual supplies. The taking unfair advantages of a neighbour's necessities, though attended with temporary success, always breeds bad blood. To lay duties on a commodity exported, which our neighbours want, is a knavish attempt to get something for nothing. The statesman who first invented it had the genius of a pickpocket, and would have been a pickpocket if fortune had suitably placed him. The nations, who have practised it, have suffered four-fold, as pickpockets ought to suffer. Savoy, by a duty on exported wines, lost the trade of Switzerland, which thenceforth raised its own wine; and (to wave other instances) Britain, by her duty on exported tea, has lost the trade of her colonies. But, as we produce no commodity that is peculiar to our country, and which may not be obtained elsewhere, the discouraging the consumption of ours by duties on exportation, and thereby encouraging a rivalship from other nations in the ports we

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trade to, is absolute folly, which indeed is mixed more or less with all knavery. For my own part, if my protest were of any consequence, I should protest against our ever doing it, even by way of reprisal. It is a meanness with which I would not dirty the conscience or character of my country.

The objections, stated against the last of the two articles, had all been made and considered here; and were sent, I imagine, from hence, by one who is offended, that they were not thought of weight sufficient to stop the signing of the treaty, till the King should, in another council, reconsider those articles, and, after agreeing to omit them, order new copies to be drawn, though all was then ready engrossed on parchment as before settled. I did not think the articles of much consequence; but I thought it of consequence, that no delay should be given to the signing of the treaty after it was ready. But, if I had known that those objections would have been sent to the Committee, I should have sent the answers they received, which had been satisfactory to *all* the Commissioners, when the treaty was settled, and until the mind of one [1] of them was altered by the opinion of two other persons.[2] It is now too late to send those answers. But I wish, for the future, if such a case should again happen, that Congress would acquaint their Commissioners with such partial objections, and hear their reasons before they determine that they have done wrong. In the mean time this only to you in private; it will be of no use to communicate it, as the resolutions of Congress will probably be received and executed before this letter comes to hand.

[1] Arthur Lee. See "Diplomatic Correspondence" (Sparks), Vol. II., p. 127. — Ed.

[2] Ralph Izard and William Lee. *Ibid.* p. 372. — Ed.

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Speaking of Commissioners in the plural, puts me in mind of inquiring, if it can be the intention of Congress to keep *three* Commissioners at this court; we have indeed four with the gentleman intended for Tuscany, who continues here, and is very angry that he was not consulted in making the treaty, which he could have mended in several particulars; and perhaps he is angry with some reason, if the instructions to him do, as he says they do, require us to consult him. We shall soon have the fifth; for the envoy to Vienna, not being received there, is, I hear, returning hither. The necessary expense of maintaining us all is, I assure you, enormously great. I wish that the utility may equal it. I imagine every one of us spends nearly as much as Lord Stormont did. It is true, he left behind him the character of a niggard; and, when the advertisement appeared for the sale of his household goods, all Paris laughed at an article of it, perhaps very innocently expressed, "*Une grande quantité du linge de table, qui n'a jamais servi.*" "*Cela est très vraisemblable,*" say they, "*car il n'a jamais donné à manger.*"

But, as to our number, whatever advantage there might be in the joint counsels of three for framing and adjusting the articles of the treaty, there can be none in managing the common business of a resident here. On the contrary, all the advantages in negotiation that result from secrecy of sentiment, and uniformity in expressing it, and in common business from despatch, are lost. In a court, too, where every word is watched and weighed, if a number of Commissioners do not every one hold the same language, in giving their opinion on any public transaction, this lessens their weight; and when it may be prudent to put on, or

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avoid certain appearances of concern, for example, or indifference, satisfaction, or dislike, where the utmost sincerity and candor should be used, and would gain credit, if no semblance of art showed itself in the inadvertent discourse, perhaps of only one of them, the hazard is in proportion to the number. And where every one must be consulted on every particular of common business, in answering every letter, &c., and one of them is offended if the smallest thing is done without his consent, the difficulty of being often and long enough together, the different opinions, and the time consumed in debating them, the interruptions by new applicants in the time of meeting, &c. &c., occasion so much postponing and delay, that correspondence languishes, occasions are lost, and the business is always behindhand.

I have mentioned the difficulty of being often and long enough together. This is considerable, where they cannot all be accommodated in the same house; but to find three people whose tempers are so good, and who like so well one another's company, and manner of living and conversing, as to agree well themselves, though being in one house, and whose servants will not by their indiscretion quarrel with one another, and by artful misrepresentations draw their masters in to take their parts, to the disturbance of necessary harmony, these are difficulties still greater and almost insurmountable. And, in consideration of the whole, I wish Congress would separate us.

The Spanish galleons, which have been impatiently expected, are at length happily arrived. The fleet and army returning from Brazil is still out, but supposed to be on the way homewards. When that and the South Sea ships are arrived, it will appear whether Spain's accession to the treaty

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has been delayed for the reasons given, or whether the reasons were only given to excuse the delay.

The English and French fleets, of nearly equal force, are now both at sea. It is not doubted, but that if they meet, there will be a battle; for, though England through fear affects to understand it to be still peace, and would excuse the depredations she has made on the commerce of France, by pretences of illicit trade, &c., yet France considers the war begun, from the time of the King's message to Parliament, complaining of the insult France had given by treating with us, and demanding aids to resist it, and the answer of both Houses, offering their lives and fortunes. These, and the taking several frigates, are deemed indisputable hostilities. Accordingly, orders are given to all the fleets and armed ships to return hostilities, and encouragement is offered to privateers, &c. An ambassador from Spain is indeed gone to London, and joyfully received there, in the idea that peace may be made by his mediation. But as yet we learn nothing certain of his mission, and doubt his effecting any thing of the kind.

War in Germany seems to be inevitable, and this occasioning great borrowings of money in Holland and elsewhere, by the powers concerned, makes it more difficult for us to succeed in ours. When we engaged to Congress to pay their bills for the interest of the sums they should borrow, we did not dream of their drawing on us for other occasions. We have already paid of Congress' drafts, to returned officers, eighty-two thousand two hundred and eleven livres, and we know not how much more of that kind we have to pay, because the Committee have never let us know the amount of those drafts, or their account of them never reached

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us, and they still continue coming in. And we are now surprised with advice of drafts from Mr. Bingham, to the amount of one hundred thousand more. If you reduce us to bankruptcy here, by a nonpayment of your drafts, consider the consequences. In my humble opinion no drafts should be made on us without first learning from us that we shall be able to answer them.

M. de Beaumarchais has been out of town ever since the arrival of your power to settle with him. I hope he will be able to furnish the supplies mentioned in the invoice and contract. The settlement may be much better made with the assistance of Mr. Deane, we being not privy to the transactions. We have agreed to give M. Dumas two hundred louis a year, thinking that he well deserves it. With great esteem, I have the honour to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

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917. TO CHEVALIER DE CHAMPIGNY[1] (A. P. S.)

Passy, July 24 1778 —

SIR,

I have received your Letter of the 9th Instant, wherein you reproach me with breaking my Engagements to you, in not having paid you twenty one Ducats w^ch^ you say I owe you, reminding me that while I charge Breach of Faith

[1] Jean, Chevalier de Champigny (1717–1787), author of "Reflexions sur le Gouvernement des femmes" (1770) and "Nouvelle histoire d'Angleterre" (1777). He wrote to Franklin May 18, 1775, reminding him of his promise to subscribe to his History of England and his History of Denmark. August 8, 1777, he wrote again that his enemies had not scrupled to say that his "History of England" would never be written. At the same time he sent a copy of Vol. I, said that Vol. II would follow shortly, and that the remaining fourteen volumes would be even more interesting! The work was dedicated to Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick. The second volume was delivered October 18, 1777. — ED.

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on the King respecting my Constituents I ought not to break mine to you, as private Engagem^ts. are more sacred than those of Sovereigns. I hold my self always ready to pay my just Debts, and shall pay this as soon as I am convinc'd it is of that kind. But as you have not favoured me with your Acc^t. I know not how it arises. — I have not here my Books (& Receipts relating to)[1] that contain my Money Transactions & Expences while in England: But I remember that many years since a Gentleman of your Name, to whom I was entirely a Stranger, apply'd to me for a Subscription to a History of England which he propos'd to write. I consider'd the Affair as one of those genteel Methods by w^ch Men of Letters are assisted when their Circumstances require Assistance without being put to the Blush in being oblig'd to ask it as a Benevolence. In that Light I gave him perhaps two or three Guineas (I do not exactly remember the Sum) and took his Receipt promising the History, but without the least Expectation of ever seeing it. Accordingly I never enquired after it; I never ask'd him for it. I had by me at the time near a Dozen such Receipts, for Books not yet printed, & many of them I believe never intended to be written. I have however lately received 2 *Volumes*, as they are Called, of that History, and four Volumes of Histories of Sweden and Denmark which I never desired or heard of before. They are badly printed and so thin as not to make more than two sizable Quarto Volumes when bound together, so that I cannot conceive them worth more than I have already paid. Nevertheless I do not on that Account desire to keep them. Had you publish'd your History of England within the Time you

[1] These words are written between the lines. — ED.

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first promis'd to your Subscribers, I might possibly have lived to read it. But you broke your Engagement with me, and that long before you could have the least Pretence for accusing me, as you now do of the same Crime; and I never complain'd of it. You have since made another Promise, that from the month of Sept. 1777, (when the two first volumes appear'd) two more should be publish'd every 5 Months. Ten Months are since elaps'd, and not one of the four volumes due has yet been heard of; so that I can have no Dependence on ever seeing the Work compleated. Besides I am now grown very old, have but little time left, and that is occupy'd with too much Public Business to allow me any Leisure for the private Amusement of reading History. I request therefore that you would direct your Correspondent here to call for and receive back the 6 Volumes of different Histories you have sent me; & desire you would accept what you formerly had of me, and believe me your Welwisher & very humᵉ Servᵗ.

B. F.

I return enclosed your Receipts.

[Nevertheless if you are the Person, & will be so good as to send me a Copy of my Subscription that I may know what I stand engag'd for, I shall take care to comply with it: But I request you would take again the Histories of Denmark & Sweden, and not put them into your Account; for my little Estate in America being in the Hands of our Enemies, I am now too poor to pay for all the Histories you may be capable of writing and translating; and that at so high a Price as 21 Ducats for two 4ᵗᵒ Volumes unbound. I am, Sir Yours &c][1]

[1] The above in brackets stricken through by Franklin's pen. — Ed.

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918. TO COMTE DE VERGENNES (P. A. E. E. U.)

Passy, July 25. 1778.

Sir,

We have just received another Copy of the Ratification. We understand the Congress have sent five by so many different Conveyances. The Vessel now arriv'd left Boston the 16th June. There was then no News there of Count D'Estaign. I send enclos'd a Letter from Dr Cooper to me, the latest Newspaper, and an Account of the Cargo of the Duchesse de Grammont, of whose safe Arrival we have now first the good News. I am, with great Respect, etc.

B. Franklin

Mr. Adams & myself were at Versailles to-day, with an Intention to pay our Respects to your Excellcy. but receiving Notice while there of the Arrival of Dispatches for us, we hasten'd back to see if there was any News of Importance.

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919. TO WILLIAM LEE (A. P. S.)

Passy Augt 13. 78

Sir,

You left a Trunk in my Care seal'd up, and took my Receipt attested by four Witnesses, wherein I promis'd to deliver that Trunk to you on your Order in the same State wherein I receiv'd it. This I am ready to do whenever you Please. But I am not willing to have any Concern in the opening of it, or in examining & Sorting as you desire, the Papers it is said to contain. For this I have my Rea-

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sons. And I do not see any Necessity for my being the Person, as here are two other Commissioners, your Brother & Mr Adams, either or both of whom can do what you desire as well or better than myself. You will be so obliging therefore as to excuse me in this, and command in some other Service.

Your most obedient
& most humble Servant
B. F.

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920. TO M. DE SARTINE[1] (A. P. S.)

Passy, Aug. 18. 1778

Sir

The Administration in England have agreed to an Exchange of Prisoners with us, and propose that it shall be made at Calais. They will accordingly furnish us with a Passport for a Vessel to bring the Prisoners from Brest to Calais, if we procure a similar one for their Vessel which is to bring the Prisoners from England. As our People languish in their Confinement, and may, when recover'd, be of Use to Capt. Jones, or in some other Enterprise, we wish the Exchange may be made as soon as possible, and therefore request your Excellency would take the Affair into Consideration, and afford us your Advice and Determination upon it. We are, with the greatest Esteem & Respect

Your Excellency's most obedient
& most humble Servants

[1] Antoine-Raymond-Jean-Gualbert-Gabriel de Sartine (1729–1801), Minister of the Marine. — Ed.

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The Minister has already agreed to give a Passport for the English vessel whenever we inform him it is necessary for Brest & therefore I presume he will have no objection to give it for Calais.

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921. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S.-W.)

Passy, Sept. 3, 1778

DEAR SIR, I received duly your Favours of July 14 and August 14. I hoped to have answered them sooner by sending the Passport. Multiplicity of Business has, I suppose, been the only Occasion of Delay in the Ministers to consider of and make out the said Passport.

I hope now soon to have it, as I do not find there is any Objection made to it. In a former Letter I propos'd to you that the Exchange would, in my Opinion, be preferable at or near Brest, and I expected some time your Answer on that Point. But perhaps you have not received my Letter; you say nothing of it.

I wish with you as much for the Restoration of Peace, as we both formerly did for the Continuance of it. But it must now be a Peace of a different kind. I was fond to a Folly of our British Connections, and it was with infinite Regret that I saw the Necessity you would force us into of breaking it. But the extream Cruelty with which we have been treated has now extinguish'd every Thought of returning to it, and separated us for ever. You have thereby lost Limbs that will never grow again.

We, too, have suffered greatly, but our Losses will soon be repaired by our good Government, our Industry, and

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the Fertility of our Country. And we now see the mischievous Consequences of such a Connection, and the Danger of their being repeated if we should be weak enough to enter into it; We see this too plainly ever to listen in the least to any such Proposition. We may therefore, with great Propriety, take leave of you in those beautiful Lines of Dante to the late Mistress of his Affections. [B. F.]

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922. TO JOHN PAUL JONES

Passy, September 6, 1778.

DEAR CAPTAIN,

I received your favours of the 24th and 31st of August.[1] I am told, by M. de C——, that M. de S—— is sorry you did not go with M. d'Orvilliers.[2] He had sent orders for that purpose, and your staying at L'Orient occasioned your missing the opportunity. Your letter was sent to the Prince de Nassau. I am confident something will be done for you, though I do not yet know what.

Dr. Bancroft has been indisposed, and I have not lately seen him; but I hear he is getting better, and suppose he has written. I go out of town early this morning for a few days, but the other Commissioners will answer your letter. I am glad you have procured a guard for the prisoners. It is a good piece of service. They have concluded in England to send us an equal number of ours, and we expect to-

[1] The original of the letter of August 24, 1778, is in L. C. (Jones Mss.). In it Jones says that at this "nice moment," he "ought to be either in search of marine knowledge with Count D'Orvilliers or on some private enterprise."— ED.

[2] M. de Chaumont; M. de Sartine; Louis Guillouet D'Orvilliers, Admiral, French navy. — ED.

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morrow to send the passport for their cartel ship, which is to bring them. If we are to deliver theirs at Calais, I should be for accepting thankfully the offer you mention.

We have no news from America, but what comes through England. Clinton's letter is in the *London Gazette*, and for style and colouring is so like Keppel's, that I cannot help thinking neither of them originals, but both the performance of some under-secretary, whose business it is to cook the news for the ministers. Upon the whole, we learn that the English army was well worried in its march,[1] and that their whole fleet and forces are now blocked up in New York by Washington and Gates on the land side, and by Count d'Estaing by sea, and that they will soon be in want of provisions. I sympathize with you in what I know you must suffer from your present inactivity; but have patience. I am, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

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923. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S. W.)

Passy, Sept 14 1778

DEAR SIR:—I now send you the Passport required. I postpon'd answering your last in hopes of obtaining it sooner; but tho' it was long since agreed to, much Business in the Admiralty Department here has I suppose occasion'd its Delay. The Port of Calais was not approv'd of, and I think the Ports mention'd (Nantes or L'Orient) are better for you as well as for us, not only as being nearer to Plymouth, but as many of your Sailors would probably have found Op-

[1] The march across New Jersey to New York, after the evacuation of Philadelphia. During this march was fought the battle of Monmouth. — S.

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portunities of deserting in the long March from Brest to Calais, they being afraid of the Press. I understand that upwards of 80 more of your People have been brought by ours Prisoners into France since the List I sent you, but I cannot now send you their Names. You have not mentioned whether the Proposition of sending us the whole of those in your Prisons was agreed to. If it is, you may rely on our sending immediately all that come to our hands for the future; or we will give at your Option, an Order for the Ballance to be deliver'd to your Fleet in America. By putting a little Confidence in one another, we may thus diminish the Miseries of War. To make the Expence of these Exchanges more equal, if another Cartel-Ship should be hereafter necessary, we thereby promise to send it to England at our Charge; and so it may continue to be done alternately as long as the War continues.

With great Esteem and Affection I am ever, Dear Sir, etc.

B. FRANKLIN.

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924. TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS (A. P. S.)

[Sept. 22, 1778]

WE have, as you know, made Overtures to the Grand Pensionary. We took that to be the regular Course of Proceeding. We expect an Answer. If he gives us none, we shall naturally conclude that there is no Disposition in their H H M M,[1] to have any Connection with us, and I believe we shall give them no farther Trouble; at least that would be my Opinion; for I think that a young State like a young Virgin, should modestly stay at home, & wait the

[1] High Mightinesses. — ED.

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Application of Suitors for an Alliance with her; and not run about offering her Amity to all the World; and hazarding their Refusal. My Colleagues have this day proposed to me to go to Holland on this Business; but tho I honour that Nation, having been frequently there, and much esteeming the People, and wishing for a firm Union between the two Republicks, I cannot think of Undertaking such a Journey without some Assurances of being properly received as a Minister of the States of America. Our Virgin is a jolly one; and tho at present not very rich, will in time be a great Fortune, & where she has a favourable Predisposition, it seems to me to be well worth cultivating. Your State perhaps is not of that Opinion; and it certainly has a right to judge for itself.

You can judge better than we at this Distance, whether any farther step can properly be taken on our Part, till some encouragement is given on the Part of their H H M M. Let me know your Sentiments.

[B. F.]

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925. TO FERDINAND GRAND (A. P. S.)

Passy, Oct. 14, 1778.

Sir,

I have considered the Note you put into my Hands, containing a Complaint of the Conduct of Capt. Cunningham in the *Revenge* Privateer. We have no Desire to justify him in any Irregularities he may have committed. On the contrary we are obliged to our Friends who give us Information of the Misconduct of any of our Cruisers, that we may take the Occasion of representing the same to our

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Government, and recommending more effectual Provision for suppressing, punishing and preventing such Practices in future.

By the Papers I have the Honour to send you enclos'd, and which I request you would put into the Hands of his Excellency Count d'Aranda, the Care of the Congress to avoid giving Offence to neutral Powers will appear most evident; first in the Commission given to Privateers, wherein it appears that Sureties are taken of their Owners that nothing shall be done by them "*inconsistent with the Usage and Customs of Nations*," and those Sureties are obliged to make good all Damages. Courts of Admiralty are regularly established in every one of the United States for judging of such Matters; to which Courts any Person injured may apply, and will certainly find Redress. Secondly, in the Proclamation of Congress, whereby strict Orders are given to all Officers of armed Vessels to pay a sacred Regard to the Rights of neutral Powers and the Usage and Customs of civilized Nations, and a Declaration made, that, if they transgress they shall not be allow'd to claim the Protection of the States, but shall suffer such Punishment as by the Usage and Custom of Nations, may be inflicted on them. Lastly, in the particular Care taken by Congress to secure the Property of some Subjects of Portugal (a Power that has not been very favourable to us), altho' no Reclamation has been made.

All these will shew that the States give no Countenance to Acts of Piracy; and, if Captain Cunningham has been guilty of that Crime he will certainly be punished for it when duely prosecuted: For not only a Regard to Justice in general, but a strong Disposition to cultivate the Friendship of

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Spain, for whose Sovereign they have the greatest Respect, will induce the Congress to pay great Attention to every Complaint, public and private, that shall come from thence. I have the Honour to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

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926. TO COMTE DE VERGENNES[1] (P. A. E. E. U.)

Passy, ce 20. Oct^re 1778.

M. LE COMTE,

Mes Colleagues croyent qu'il seroit necessaire que je fusse en Hollande, & que ma Presence pourroit y accelerer les Choses. Ils me pressent en consequence. Je crains que ce servit plutôt les reculer que les avancer, & que ce ne soit pas le moment, de s'y presenter. Personne ne sçait mieux que votre Excellence ce que nous convient de faire à cet egard, & je ne puis avoir de Conseil meilleur & plus agreable que le vôtre. Si vous voulez bien me l'accorder, je m'y conformera avec la Confiance.

J'ai l'honneur d'etre avec Respect

M. le Comte,

Votre tres humble & tres obeissant

Serviteur,

B. FRANKLIN.

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927. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S. W.)

Passy, Oct. 20, 1778.

DEAR SIR:—I received your Favour of the 9th Instant with a Copy of the Letter from the Admiralty Office, relative to

[1] Written entirely in Franklin's hand. — ED.

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the proposed Exchange of Prisoners, in which the precise Number of those we have here is desired. I cannot at present give it you, they being disposed in different Ports; and indeed it will always be difficult to be precise in it, the Number continually changing by new Prisoners brought in and some escaping. I think the List I formerly sent you was near 200; since which, 60 odd have been brought into France from the North Seas by Capt. M°Neil,[1] and some by others of our Cruisers and I just now hear that we have near an hundred more in Spain, taken by one of our Privateers in two New York Packets, one going thither, the other returning, 88 of which are Officers of your Army. I wish their Lordships could have seen it well to exchange upon Account; but tho' they may not think it safe trusting to us, we shall make no Difficulty in trusting to them. And to expedite the Exchange, and save the Time that obtaining a correct List would require, we make this Proposition that if their Lordships will send us over 250 of our People we will deliver all we have in France. If the Number we have falls short of the 250, the Cartel-Ship may take back as many of those she brings as the Deficiency amounts to, delivering no more than she receives. If our Number exceeds the 250 we will deliver them all nevertheless, their Lordships promising to send us immediately a Number equal to the Surplus. We would thus wish to commence, by this first Advance, that mutual Confidence which it would be for the good of Mankind that Nations should maintain honourably with each other, tho' engag'd in War. I hope this will remove all Obstructions to a speedy Completion of the

[1] Hector McNeil, captain of the American privateer *General Mifflin*. — ED.

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Business, as the Winter approaches and the poor Prisoners on both sides may suffer in it extremely.

I am etc. B. FRANKLIN.

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928. TO COMTE DE VERGENNES (P. A. E. E. U.)

Passy, Oct. 22. 1778

SIR

I am perfectly of the same Sentiments with your Excellency respecting Count d'Estaign.[1] I know his Zeal for the Cause, and have a high Opinion of his Abilities. I have therefore not the least doubt but that his going to Boston was a Measure absolutely necessary, and will appear to be for the common Good. — We just now learn that our Troops on Rhode island had made good their Retreat without the Loss of a Man. I have the honour to be with great Respect, etc. B. FRANKLIN.

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929. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S. W.)

Passy, Oct. 26, 1778.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received yours without Date, containing an old Scotch Sonnet, full of natural Sentiment and beautiful Simplicity. I cannot make an entire application of it to present Cir-

[1] Charles Hector, Count d'Estaing, born in 1729, vice-admiral in 1777 he raised his pennant on the *Languedoc* of ninety guns; left Toulon on the 13th of April, 1778, and reached Rhode Island on the 29th of July. He forced the passage into Newport and the next day sailed against the forces of Howe and Byron. His fleet was divided by a storm. From Newport he withdrew to Boston and aroused the anger of the Americans who accused him of treason. — ED.

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cumstances; but, taking it in Parts, and changing Persons, some of it is extremely *apropos*. First Jenie may be supposed Old England, and Jamie, America. Jenie laments the loss of Jamie, and recollects with Pain his Love for her, his Industry in Business to promote her Wealth and Welfare, and her own Ingratitude.

"Young Jamie loved me weel,
And sought me for his Bride,
But saving ane Crown,
He had naithing beside,
To make that Crown a Pound, my Jamie gang'd to Sea,
And the Crown and the Pound were all for me."

Her Grief for this Separation is expressed very pathetically.

"The Ship was a Wrack,
Why did na Jennie die;
O why was I spared
To cry, Wae is me!"

There is no Doubt but that honest Jammie had still so much Love for her as to Pity her in his Heart, tho' he might, at the same time, be not a little angry with her.

Towards the Conclusion, we must change the Persons, and let Jamie be Old England, Jennie, America, and old Robin Gray, the Kingdom of France. Then honest Jenie, having made a Treaty of Marriage with Gray, expresses her firm Resolution of Fidelity, in a manner that does Honour to her good Sense, and her Virtue.

"I may not think of Jamie,
For that would be a Sin.
But I maun do my best,
A gude wife to be;
For auld Robin Gray
Is very kind to me."

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You ask my Sentiments of a Truce for 5 or 7 Years, in which no mention should be made of that Stumbling Block to England, the Independence of America.

I must tell you fairly and frankly, that there can be no Treaty of Peace with us, in which France is not included. But I think a Treaty might be made between the three Powers, in which England *expressly* Renouncing the Dependence of America seems no more necessary, than her renouncing the Title of King of France, which has always been claimed for her Kings. Yet, perhaps, it would be better for England to act nobly and generously on the Occasion, by granting more than she could at present be compelled to grant, make America easy on the Score of old Claims; cede all that remains in North America, and thus conciliate and strengthen a young Power which she wishes to have a future and serviceable Friend. I do not think England would be a loser by such Cession. She may hold her remaining Possessions there, but not without vast Expence; and they would be the Occasion of constant Jealousies, frequent Quarrels, and renew'd Wars. The United States, continually growing stronger, will have them at last; and, by the generous Conduct above hinted at, all the intermediate Loss of Blood and Treasure might be spared, and solid, lasting Peace promoted. This seems to me good Counsel, but I know it can't be followed.

The Friend you mention must always be welcome to me, with or without the Cheese; but I do not see how his coming hither could be of any Use at present, unless in Quality of a Plenipotentiary to treat of a sincere Peace between all the Parties.

Your Commissioners are acting very indiscreetly in Amer-

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ica. They first spoke very disrespectfully of our good Ally. They have since called in question the power of Congress to treat with them; and have endeavour'd to begin a Dispute about the Detention of Bourgoyne's Troops, an Affair which I conceive not to be within their Commission. They are vainly trying, by Publications, to excite the people against the Congress. Gov^r^ Johnston has been attempting to bribe the Members; and without the least Regard to Truth, has asserted three Propositions, which he says, he will undertake to prove. The two first of them I know to be false, and I believe the third to be so.[1] The Congress have refused to treat with the Commissioners, while he continues one of them, and he has therefore resigned.

These Gentlemen do not appear well qualify'd for their Business. I think they will never *heal* the Breach, but they may *widen* it. I am, my very dear Friend, yours most affectionately,

N. A. [B. FRANKLIN.]

[1] Governor Johnstone was one of the British Commissioners for treating with Congress. These propositions were contained in a letter written by him to Francis Dana, a member of Congress, and dated at Philadelphia, June 10th, 1778. "There are three facts," said he, "which I wish to assure you of. First, that Dr. Franklin, on the 28th of March last, in discussing the several articles we wish to make the basis of our treaty, was perfectly satisfied they were beneficial to North America, and such as she should accept. Second, that this treaty with France was not the first treaty, that France had *exacted*, and with which Mr. Simeon Deane had put to sea, but granted and acceded to after the sentiments of the people of Great Britain had fully changed, after the friends to America had gained their points for reconciliation, and solely with a view to disappoint the good effects of our endeavours. The third fact is, that Spain, unasked, had sent a formal message, disapproving of the conduct of France." — ED.

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930. TO FERDINAND GRAND[1]

Passy, Nov. 3, 1778.

We owe our thanks, sir, to the person who has transmitted to us, through you, the complaint we have received against Mr. Conyngham, and we can assure him anew that, penetrated with the respect for S. M. C.,[2] nothing pains us more than complaints on his part against our people. He will have seen, by the papers transmitted by you at the time from us to S. E. M. Count d'Aranda, the measures which Congress have taken to prevent any misconduct on the part of our privateers and seamen, and nothing better proves its solicitude in this regard than the proclamation it has just issued, of which the enclosed No. 2 is a copy, and to which we join its resolution for the protection of the property of a ship although belonging to a power with which we have no sympathy.

But if one directs his attention to the atrocious proceedings of the English towards all nations without distinction, he will not be surprised that their pernicious example finds imitators among some individuals of a nation which they have so greatly outraged. But this does not excuse Conyngham. It is a crime in our eyes to have displeased a power for which Congress is penetrated with respect, and although justified in seizing, by way of reprisals, the English prize which Conyngham had brought to Teneriffe to be sent to Martinique, we will none the less inform Congress of the grounds for complaint which this privateer has given

[1] Translated from a French copy in Simancas. — Ed.

[2] His Christian Majesty. — Ed.

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to his Catholic Majesty. This will certainly be a new motive for paying to his flag the homage and respect which it entertains for him. I hope from the wisdom as well as from the justice of S. M. that he will confide in this expression of our sentiments towards him and in turn will permit us to experience the effects of them.

I have the honour to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

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931. TO JOHN ROSS (U. OF P.)

Passy, Nov. 5th 1778

DEAR SIR,

I received yours of the 27th past, enclosing the resolve of Congress relative to Mr T. Morris's Papers. The Trunk said to contain them was deposited with me by Mr Lee Esqr on Acct of his going to Germany. One of the Seals you mention was broken in bringing it to my House, and I got him to put on his own Seal instead of it. In this State it remains, and is ready to be delivered to any person you may appoint to receive it from me. The Keys are in the Hands of Arthur Lee Esqr at Chaillot. — I have never seen Mr Morris's Papers: And from the time that I understood there was a Dispute about them between you & Mr Lee, I determin'd not to have anything to do with the examining or separating them. The Order of the Minister for putting Mr Lee in Possession of them, was apply'd for to us on a Suggestion that otherwise they would fall into the hands of M. Penet which might be attended with some Inconvenience both to the Public & the Compa of W. & Morris. My Idea was, that Mr Lee would take out

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the public Papers and deliver the others to you. He says your quarrelling with him prevented his doing so. I had no suspicion that those belonging to Willing & Morris would be brought up here. — I am glad an Order is come for delivering them to you. But as the Dispute about them may hereafter be continued, and Papers suspected to be embezzeled by somebody; and as I have sign'd a terrible long Receipt for the Trunk, of which I have no copy, and only remember that it appear'd to be constructed with all the Circumspection of the Writers Motto, *Non incautus futuri* and that it fill'd a Half Sheet so full there was scarce Room for the Names of the four Evidences he requir'd to witness it: I beg you will not expect me to send it to you at Nantes but appoint who you please to receive it for you here. For I think I must deliver it before Witnesses, who may certify the State of the Seals; nothing being more likely than that Seals on a Trunk may rub off in the Carriage on so long a Journey; and then I should be expos'd to the Artful Suggestions of some who do not love me, & whom I conceive to be of very malignant Dispositions. — As to the Sorting of the Papers after you receive them, I see no Direction about it in the Order of Congress. It is therefore left to your Discretion. I am Sir

Your most obedient
humble Servant
[B. FRANKLIN.]

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932. TO M. BARON[1] (A. P. S.)

[Nov. 20, 1778.]

Sir

I thank you for your readiness to serve Capt. Prince. His Bills for moderate Supplies will be honour'd. The Bearer is my Grandson, I beg to recommend him to your Civilities. I shall Answer the rest of your Letter soon, I have the honour to be,

Sir

Your most obed[t]
humble Servant
B. Franklin.

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933. TO JOB PRINCE[2] (A. P. S.)

Passy near Paris, Nov. 20. 1778
11 at Night

Sir

I have just received yours of the 18th Instant. My Grandson, William T. Franklin, who is the Bearer of this, and will have the honour of delivering it into your hands, sets out early to-morrow morning for that purpose. He is my private Secretary, and is a Young Man of Trust & Discretion, to whom you may safely confide, what you have to communicate to the Commissioners. We have rec[d] no Account of your Vessel or its destination from Congress, as our Dispatches have miscarried; therefore can give you no Advice till we have more Information from You, than is contained in your Letter.

[1] A merchant at Dieppe. — Ed. [2] Commander of U.S.S. *Concord*. — Ed.

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If you send any Prizes into Dunkirk, address them to Mr. Coff^rn^ there, Dieppe Mr. Baron, L'Orient or Nantes to Mr. Schweighauser, Bourdeaux, Mr. Bondfield. — In any other, let your Masters enquire for American Agents. I wish you a good Cruise, & safe Return to your Country with much Profit and Honor; being

Sir Your most obed^t^
humble Servant
B. FRANKLIN.

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934. TO M. BARON (A. P. S.)

Passy Nov. 21. 1778

SIR

I write this Line per Post just to acq^t^ you that your Letter relating to Capt Prince is received, and that a Person in our Confidence, as desired by him, sets out this Day for Dieppe with Answers to your & the Captain's Letters, and will probably be with you soon after your Receipt of this; of which it would be well to give the Capt^n^ Notice, that they may meet as soon as possible. I have the honour to be,

Sir,
Your most obedient
humble Servant,
B. F.

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935. TO W. T. FRANKLIN (A. P. S.)

Passy, Nov. 26. 1778

DEAR GRANDSON,

I receiv'd yours last Evening, with the Copies enclos'd, and am now more certain than before that the whole is a piece of Roguery. As when you receive this, it will be 10 Days since his quitting the Road of Dieppe, if he has not return'd in that time, it is probable he will not return at all; so we would have you return hither without waiting longer for him. If he should hereafter come, and venture on shore, he will be taken by the Orders you leave from the Minister; but I believe he is too cunning for that. My Respect to M^r^ Baron. I am ever,

Your affectionate Grandfather

B. FRANKLIN

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936. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S. W.)

Passy, Nov. 29, 1778

DEAR SIR: — I have heard nothing from you lately concerning the Exchange of Prisoners. Is that Affair dropt? Winter is coming on apace. I understand that your charitable Contribution is near expended, and not likely to be renewed. Many of those unfortunate People must suffer greatly. I wish to have a Line from you informing me what may be depended on. I am as ever,

B. FRANKLIN.

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937. TO ABBÉ DE LA ROCHE (B. N.)

Dec. 7, '78.

Voici, mon cher Maitre, deux Exercises de plus. L'un est la Suite de l'Hypothese; l'autre en forme de Billet à *Notre Dame* d'Auteuil. Je suis charmé toujours de vos Corrections, mais comme je vois par ceux que vous avez fait vers le fin du 22e Article que je n'ai pas ete assez clair pour être entendu. Je crois qu'il sera mieux d'omettre les dernieres 5 ou 6 Lignes, nommement tous ceux qui suivent le Mot Electricité.[1] Ainsi vous pouvez corriger votre Copie. Car ces Lignes ne sont pas necessaires.

Voila un autre Exercise.

[B. Franklin.]

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938. À MADAME HELVÉTIUS[2]

Chagriné de votre résolution barbare, prononcée si positivement hier au soir, de rester seule pendant la vie en honneur de votre cher mari, je me retirois chez moi, tombois sur mon lit, me croyois mort, et que je me trouvois dans les Champs-Elisées.

On me demanda si j'avois envie de voir quelques personnages particuliers. "Menez-moi chez les philosophes." "Il y en a deux qui demeurent ici près dans ce jardin; ils

[1] See article on "Aurora Borealis," Vol. VII, p. 209. — Ed.

[2] This is apparently the "Billet à Notre Dame d'Auteuil" referred to in the previous letter. — Ed.

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sont de très-bons voisins, et très-amis l'un de l'autre." "Qui sont-ils?" "Socrate et Helvétius." "Je les estime prodigieusement tous les deux; mais faites-moi voir premièrement Helvétius, parce que j'entends un peu de François et pas un mot de Grec." — Il m'a reçu avec beaucoup de courtoisie, m'ayant connu, disoit-il, de réputation il y avoit quelque temps. Il me demanda mille choses sur la guerre, et sur l'état présent de la religion, de la liberté, et du gouvernement en France. "Vous ne demandez donc rien," lui dis-je, "de votre chère amie Madame Helvétius; et cependant elle vous aime encore excessivement, et il n'y a qu'une heure que j'étois chez elle." "Ah!" dit-il, "vous me faites ressouvenir de mon ancienne félicité. Mais il faut l'oublier pour être heureux ici. Pendant plusieurs des premières années, je n'ai pensé qu'à elle. Enfin je suis consolé. J'ai pris une autre femme; la plus semblable à elle que j'ai pu trouver. Elle n'est pas, il est vrai, tout-à-fait si belle, mais elle a autant de bon sens, beaucoup d'esprit, et elle m'aime infiniment. Son étude continuelle est de me plaire, et elle est sortie actuellement chercher le meilleur nectar et ambroisie pour me régaler ce soir; restez avec moi et vous la verrez." "J'apperçois," dis-je, "que votre ancienne amie est plus fidelle que vous; car plusieurs bons partis lui ont été offerts qu'elle a refusés tous. Je vous confesse que je l'ai aimée, moi, à la folie; mais elle étoit dure à mon égard, et m'a rejeté absolument pour l'amour de vous." "Je vous plains," dit-il, "de votre malheur; car vraiment c'est une bonne et belle femme, et bien aimable. Mais l'Abbé de la R****, et l'Abbé M****[1] ne sont-ils pas encore quelquefois chez elle?" "Oui as-

[1] Abbés de la Roche and Morellet. — Ed.

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surément; car elle n'a pas perdu un seul de vos amis." "Si vous aviez gagné l'Abbé M * * * * (avec du bon café à la crême) à parler pour vous, vous auriez peut-être réussi; car il est raisonneur subtil comme Duns Scotus ou St. Thomas; il met ses arguments en si bon ordre qu'ils deviennent presque irrésistibles. Et si l'Abbé de la R * * * * avoit été gagne (par quelque belle édition d'un vieux classique) à parler *contre* vous, cela auroit été mieux; car j'ai toujours observé, que quand il lui conseilla quelque chose, elle avoit un penchant très-fort à faire le revers." A ces mots entra la nouvelle Madame Helvétius avec le nectar; à l'instant je l'ai reconnue pour être Madame Franklin, mon ancienne amie Américaine. Je l'ai réclamée, mais elle me dit froidement; "J'ai été votre bonne femme quarante-neuf années et quatre mois; — presqu'un demi-siècle; soyez content de cela. J'ai formé ici une nouvelle connexion, qui durera à l'éternité."

Indigné de ce refus de mon Eurydice, je pris de suite la résolution de quitter ces ombres ingrates, et revenir en ce bon monde, revoir le soleil et vous. — Me voici! — *Vengeons-nous!*

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939. THE EPHEMERA[1]

An Emblem of Human Life

You may remember, my dear friend, that when we lately spent that happy day in the delightful garden and sweet

[1] The first of the "Bagatelles." It was addressed to Madame Brillon, in memory of a happy day at her country home — *Moulin Joly* — and was written in 1778. — Ed.

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society of the Moulin Joly, I stopt a little in one of our walks, and staid some time behind the company. We had been shown numberless skeletons of a kind of little fly, called an ephemera, whose successive generations, we were told, were bred and expired within the day. I happened to see a living company of them on a leaf, who appeared to be engaged in conversation. You know I understand all the inferior animal tongues: my too great application to the study of them is the best excuse I can give for the little progress I have made in your charming language. I listened through curiosity to the discourse of these little creatures; but as they, in their national vivacity, spoke three or four together, I could make but little of their conversation. I found, however, by some broken expressions that I heard now and then, they were disputing warmly on the merit of two foreign musicians, one a *cousin*, the other a *moscheto;* in which dispute they spent their time, seemingly as regardless of the shortness of life as if they had been sure of living a month. Happy people! thought I, you live certainly under a wise, just, and mild government, since you have no public grievances to complain of, nor any subject of contention but the perfections and imperfections of foreign music. I turned my head from them to an old grey-headed one, who was single on another leaf, and talking to himself. Being amused with his soliloquy, I put it down in writing, in hopes it will likewise amuse her to whom I am so much indebted for the most pleasing of all amusements, her delicious company and heavenly harmony.

"It was," said he, "the opinion of learned philosophers of our race, who lived and flourished long before my time, that this vast world, the Moulin Joly, could not itself subsist

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more than eighteen hours; and I think there was some foundation for that opinion, since, by the apparent motion of the great luminary that gives life to all nature, and which in my time has evidently declined considerably towards the ocean at the end of our earth, it must then finish its course, be extinguished in the waters that surround us, and leave the world in cold and darkness, necessarily producing universal death and destruction. I have lived seven of those hours, a great age, being no less than four hundred and twenty minutes of time. How very few of us continue so long! I have seen generations born, flourish, and expire. My present friends are the children and grandchildren of the friends of my youth, who are now, alas, no more! And I must soon follow them; for, by the course of nature, though still in health, I cannot expect to live above seven or eight minutes longer. What now avails all my toil and labor, in amassing honey-dew on this leaf, which I cannot live to enjoy! What the political struggles I have been engaged in, for the good of my compatriot inhabitants of this bush, or my philosophical studies for the benefit of our race in general! for, in politics, what can laws do without morals? Our present race of ephemeræ will in a course of minutes become corrupt, like those of other and older bushes, and consequently as wretched. And in philosophy how small our progress! Alas! art is long, and life is short! My friends would comfort me with the idea of a name, they say, I shall leave behind me; and they tell me I have lived long enough to nature and to glory. But what will fame be to an ephemera who no longer exists? And what will become of all history in the eighteenth hour, when the world itself, even the whole Moulin Joly, shall come to its end, and be buried in universal ruin?"

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To me, after all my eager pursuits, no solid pleasures now remain, but the reflection of a long life spent in meaning well, the sensible conversation of a few good lady ephemeræ, and now and then a kind smile and a tune from the ever amiable *Brillante.*[1] B. FRANKLIN.

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940. AURORA BOREALIS (L. C.)

Suppositions and Conjectures towards forming an Hypothesis for its Explanation.[2]

AIR heated by any Means becomes rarefied and specifically *lighter* than other Air in the same Situation not heated.

Air being thus made lighter rises, and the neighbouring cooler, heavier Air takes its place.

If in the middle of a Room you heat the Air by a Stove,

[1] For the history of this "bagatelle" see Franklin's letter to William Carmichael, June 17, 1780. The substance of these reflections appeared in *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, December 4, 1735, in an essay on "Human Vanity." It has been generally said that the "Essay" was written by Franklin, and that in "the above letter 'to the ever amiable Brillante,' it was doubtless re-written from memory." Franklin, however, in his letter to Carmichael says, "The thought was partly taken from a little piece of *some unknown writer* which I met with fifty years since in a newspaper, and which the sight of the ephemera brought to my recollection." — ED.

[2] First published in Benjamin Vaughan's edition of the "Works of Franklin." Vaughan says, "If I mistake not, the paper was read at the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, at the meeting held immediately after Easter, 1779." Dr. Ingenhousz acknowledged the receipt of the paper, May 25, 1779, after it had been read before the Academy. Vaughan expressed much interest in it, May 31, 1779. Abbé Rozier requested permission, August 21, 1779, to print it in *Le Journal de Physique*. Extracts had already appeared in *Le Mercure de France*. Further to fix the date of composition, see letter to Abbé de la Roche, December 8, 1778. Two Ms. copies are in L. C., one written by Franklin, the other by Ingenhousz from the original sent to him by Franklin. — ED.

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or Pot of burning Coals near the Floor, the heated Air will *rise* to the Cieling, spread there over the cooler Air till it comes to the cold Walls; there being condensed and made heavier, it *descends* to supply the Place of that cool Air which had moved towards the Stove or Fire, in order to supply the Place of the heated Air which had ascended from the Space around the Stove or Fire.

Thus there will be a continual Circulation of Air in the Room, which may be render'd visible by making a little Smoke; for that Smoke will rise and circulate with the Air.

A similar Operation is perform'd by Nature on the Air of the Globe. Our Atmosphere is of a certain height, perhaps at a Medium Miles. Above that height it is so rare as to be almost a Vacuum. The Air heated between the Tropics is continually rising, its Place is supply'd by northerly and southerly Winds which come from the cooler regions.

The light, heated Air, floating above the cooler and denser, must spread northward and southward, and descend near the two Poles, to supply the Place of the cooler Air which had moved towards the Equator.

Thus a circulation of Air is kept up in our Atmosphere as in the Room above mentioned.

That heavier and lighter Air may move in Currents of different and even opposite direction, appears sometimes by the Clouds that happen to be in those Currents, as plainly as by the Smoke in the Experiment above mentioned. Also in opening a *Door* between two Chambers, one of which has been warmed, by holding a candle near the top, near the bottom, and near the middle, you will find a strong current of warm Air passing out of the warmed Room *above*, and

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another of cool Air entering it *below*, while in the Middle there is little or no Motion.

The great Quantity of Vapour rising between the Tropics forms Clouds, which contain much Electricity.

Some of them fall in Rain, before they come to the polar Regions.

If the Rain be received in an isolated Vessel, the Vessel will be electrified; for every Drop brings down some Electricity with it.

The same is done by Snow and Hail.

The Electricity so descending in temperate Climates, is received and imbib'd by the Earth.

If the Clouds are not sufficiently discharg'd by this Means, they sometimes discharge themselves by striking into the Earth, where the Earth is fit to receive their Electricity.

The earth in temperate and warm Climates is generally fit to receive it, being a good Conductor.

A certain Quantity of Heat will make some Bodies good Conductors that will not otherwise conduct.

Thus Wax render'd fluid, and Glass softened by Heat, will both of them conduct.

And Water, tho' naturally a good Conductor, will not conduct well when frozen into Ice by a common Degree of Cold; not at all where the Cold is extream.

Snow falling upon frozen Ground has been found to retain its Electricity; and to communicate it to an isolated Body, when after falling, it has been driven about by the Wind.

The Humidity, contain'd in all the equatorial Clouds that reach the Polar Regions, must there be condens'd and fall in Snow.

The great Cake of Ice that eternally covers those Regions

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may be too hard frozen to permit the Electricity, descending with that Snow, to enter the Earth.

It will therefore be *accumulated upon that Ice.*

The Atmosphere being heavier in the Polar Regions, than in the equatorial, will there be lower; as well from that Cause, as from the smaller Effect of the centrifugal Force; consequently the Distance to the Vacuum above the Atmosphere will be less at the Poles than elsewhere; and probably much less than the Distance (upon the Surface of the Globe) extending from the Pole to the Latitudes in which the Earth is so thaw'd as to receive and imbibe Electricity; the Frost continuing to Lat. 80, which is 10 Degrees or 600 Miles from the Pole, while the Height of the Atmosphere there, can scarce be esteemed above Miles.[1]

The *Vacuum* above is a good Conductor.

May not then the great Quantity of Electricity brought into the Polar Regions by the Clouds, which are condens'd there, and fall in Snow, which Electricity would enter the Earth, but cannot penetrate the Ice; may it not, I say (*as a Bottle overcharged*) break thro' that low Atmosphere and run along in the Vacuum over the Air towards the Equator, diverging as the Degrees of Longitude enlarge, strongly visible where densest, and becoming less visible as it more diverges; till it finds a Passage to the Earth in more temperate Climates, or is mingled with their upper Air?

If such an Operation of Nature were really performed, would it not give all the Appearances of an AURORA BOREALIS?

And would not the auroras become more frequent *after the Approach of Winter;* not only because more visible in

[1] See letter to Abbé de la Roche, December 7, 1778, for reference to this paragraph. — ED.

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longer Nights; but also because in Summer the long Presence of the Sun may soften the Surface of the great Ice Cake, and render it a Conductor, by which the Accumulation of Electricity in the polar Regions will be prevented?[1]

The *atmosphere of the polar regions* being made more dense by the extreme cold, and all the moisture in that air being frozen, may not any great light arising therein, and passing thro' it, render its density in some degree visible during the night-time, to those who live in the rarer air of more southern latitudes? And would it not, in that case, altho' in itself a complete and full circle, extending perhaps 10 degrees from the pole, appear to spectators so placed (who could see only a part of it) *in the form of a segment*, its chord resting on the horizon, and its arch elevated more or less above it, as seen from latitudes more or less distant, *darkish in color*, but yet sufficiently *transparent* to permit some stars to be seen through it?

The rays of electric matter issuing out of a body, diverge by mutually repelling each other, unless there be some conducting body near to receive them; and if that conducting body be at a greater distance, they will *first diverge*, and then *converge* in order to enter it. May not this account for some of the varieties of figure seen at times in the *motions* of the luminous matter of the auroras; since it is possible, that, in passing over the atmosphere from the north, in all directions or meridians, towards the equator, the rays of that matter may find, in many places portions of cloudy regions, or moist atmosphere under them, which (being in the natural or negative state) may be fit to receive them, and towards

[1] At this place the copy in L. C. ends. What follows is in the handwriting of Ingenhousz. — ED.

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which they may therefore converge; and when one of those receiving bodies is more than saturated, they may *again* diverge from it, towards other surrounding masses of such humid atmosphere, and thus form the *crowns*, as they are called, and other figures, mentioned in the histories of this meteor?

If it be true, that the clouds which go to the polar regions carry thither the vapours of the equatorial and temperate regions, which vapours are condensed by the extreme cold of the polar regions, and fall in snow or hail; the winds which come from those regions ought to be generally dry, unless they gain some humidity by sweeping the ocean in their way; and, if I mistake not, the winds between the northwest and northeast are for the most part dry, when they have continued some time.[1]

[In the Philosophical Transactions for 1774, p. 128, is a letter from Mr. J. S. Winn, to Dr. Franklin, stating that, since he had first made the observation concerning the south or southwest winds succeeding an aurora, he had found it invariably obtaining in twenty-three instances; and he adds in a note a fresh confirming instance. In reply, Dr. Franklin makes the following conjecture.]

The *aurora borealis*, though visible almost every night of clear weather in the more northern regions, and very high in the atmosphere, can scarce be visible in England but when the atmosphere is pretty clear of clouds for the whole space between us and those regions; and therefore are sel-

[1] Here ends the copy written by Ingenhousz. — Ed. In one of the copies of this paper there is a line drawn across this last article. — W. T. F.

This paragraph is not contained in Mr. Vaughan's edition and was probably not communicated to him by the author. — S.

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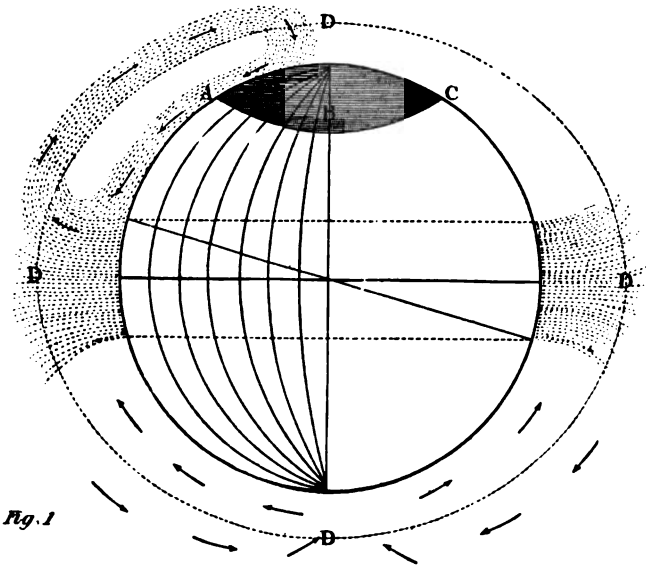
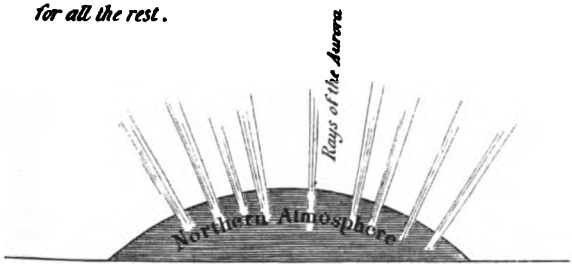


Fig. 1

The Arrows represent the general Currents of the Air.
A.B.C. *the great Cake of Ice & Snow in the Polar Regions.*
D.D.D.D. *the Medium Height of the Atmosphere.*
The Representation is made only for one Quarter and one Meridian of the Globe; but is to be understood the same for all the rest.



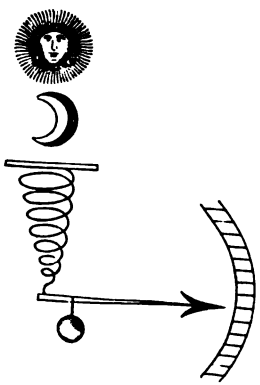


Fig. 2.

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dom visible there. This extensive clearness may have been produced by a long continuance of northerly winds. When the winds have long continued in one quarter, the return is often violent. Allowing the fact so repeatedly observed by Mr. Winn, perhaps this may account for the violence of the southerly winds, that soon follow the appearance of the aurora on our coasts.

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941. TO ARTHUR LEE (P. H. S.)

Passy, Jan. 3. 1779

Sir,

I am certain that I have not the Papers you mention, having never since seen them, as I should have done in sorting and looking over my Papers occasionally; if they had been among them.

You know the Gentleman better than I do, and can therefore better judge whether a Meeting with him for the propos'd purpose of making Peace may not be like some of the former, intended merely to give Countenance at this time to Change Ally-Reports, help the Stocks, and assist the Government in making their new Loans, or their Friends in retailing their Subscriptions. When I have the honour of seeing you, we can talk more fully on the Subject. Perhaps it would be well, in case you write to-day, to desire to know if he is or will be authoriz'd to make any Propositions. I am, with great Esteem,

Sir

Your most obedient
humble Servant
B. Franklin.

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942. TO RALPH IZARD[1] (A. P. S.)

Passy, Jan 4. 1779

SIR,

Your Intimation that you expect more Money from us, obliges us to expose to you our Circumstances. Upon the Supposition that Congress had borrowed in America but five millions of Dollars, or 25 millions of Livres, & relying on the Remittances intended to be sent us, for answering other Demands, we gave Expectations that we should be able to pay here the Interest of that Sum, as a Means of supporting the Credit of the Currency. The Congress have borrowed near twice that Sum, and are now actually drawing on us for the Interest, the Bills appearing here daily for Acceptance: Their Distress for Money in America has been so great from the enormous Expence of the War, that they have also been induc'd to draw on us for very large Sums, to stop other pressing Demands: And they have not been able to purchase Remittances for us to the Extent they propos'd; and, of what they have sent, much has been taken or treacherously carried into England; only two small Cargo's of Tobacco having arrived, and they are long since mortgag'd to the Farmers General, so that they produce us nothing, but leave us Expences to pay.

The Continental Vessels of War, which come to France, have likewise required great Sums of us, to furnish or refit

[1] This letter was written by Dr. Franklin, but intended to be signed by the Commissioners jointly. On the back of the manuscript is the following endorsement: "Rough draft of a proposed letter in answer to one from Mr. Izard to the Commissioners, dated January 2d." As it is here called the draft of a *proposed* letter, it may possibly never have been sent. — S.

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them, & supply the Men with Necessaries. The Prisoners too who escape from England, claim a very expensive Assistance from us, and are much dissatisfied with the scanty Allowance we are able to afford them. The Interest Bills above mentioned, of the Drawing of which we have receiv'd Notice, amount to two Millions & an half, and we have not a fifth Part of the Sum in our Banker's hands to answer them. And large Orders to us from Congress for Supplies of Cloathing, Arms & Ammunition, remain uncomply'd with for want of Money.

In this Situation of our Affairs, we hope you will not insist on our giving you a farther Credit with our Banker, with whom we are daily in danger of having no farther Credit ourselves. It is not a Year since you received from us the sum of Two Thousand Guineas, which you thought necessary on Acc^{t} of your being to set out immediately for Florence. You have not incurr'd the Expence of that Journey. You are a Gentleman of Fortune. You did not come to France with any Dependence on being maintain'd here with your Family at the Expence of the United States, in the Time of their Distress, and without rendring them the equivalent Service they expected.

On all these Considerations we should rather hope that you would be willing to reimburse us the Sum we have advanc'd to you, if it may be done with any possible Convenience to your Affairs. Such a Supply would at least enable us to relieve more liberally our unfortunate Countrymen, who have long been Prisoners, stript of every thing, of whom we daily expect to have near three hundred upon our hands by the Exchange. We have the honour to be, &c.

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943. TO THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

(A. P. S.)

Passy, Jan. 15. 1779.

GENTLEMEN,

It being undoubtedly our Duty to give the clearest Account to Congress of the Disbursement of their Money intrusted to us; and as I apprehend our advancing to William Lee and Ralph Izard Esquires so large a Sum as Four Thousand Guineas at once, in Feb., 1778, without any Order of Congress for so doing, and at a time when Money was much Wanted to fulfil their actual Orders in the Purchase of Arms, &c., may subject the Commissioners to censure, I think it right & necessary to relate the Circumstances, that they may be communicated to our Constituents.

Those Gentlemen, then, having represented to Mr. Deane, Mr. Lee & myself, that tho' they had received Commissions to go & reside at the Courts of Berlin, Vienna, & Florence, no Provision had arrived for their Subsistence; that they were nearly ready to set out for their respective Destinations, but wanted Money to defray the Expence of their Journeys; for which, they therefore requested us to furnish them with a Credit on our Banker; — the Commissioners, fearing that the Public Interests might possibly suffer, if those Journeys were delay'd till the necessary Provision or Orders should arrive from America, thought they might be justified in giving such a Credit, for the Expence of those Journeys; and Mr. Lee, being ask'd what sum he imagin'd would be necessary, said justly that the Expence of his Journey could not be exactly ascertain'd beforehand; but, if he were empower'd to draw on our Banker, he should certainly only

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take from time to time what was absolutely necessary, and therefore it was of little Importance for what Sum the Credit should be order'd; it would however look handsome & confidential, if the sum were two Thousand Louis. We thereupon confiding that no more of this Money would be taken out of our Disposition, than the Expences of the Journeys as they should accrue, did frankly but unwarily give the Orders.

Mr. Deane and myself were, however, soon surpriz'd with the Intelligence, that the Gentlemen had gone directly to the Banker, & by Virtue of these Orders had taken out of our Account the whole Sum mentioned, & carried it to their own; leaving the Money indeed in his Hands, but requiring his Receipt for it as their Money, for which he was to be accountable to them only.

This enormous Sum having been received by those Gentlemen not above ten months, I was still more surpriz'd, when the following Letters were communicated to me by my present Colleagues, requiring more Money. My colleague, Mr. Adams, was at first as much surpriz'd as myself.——[1]

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944. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S. W.)

Passy, January 25, 1779

DEAR SIR: — I a long time believed that your government were in earnest in agreeing to an exchange of prisoners.

[1] Here the manuscript breaks off, apparently in an unfinished state, and it is uncertain whether this letter was sent. The substance of it, however, is contained in a letter to the Committee of Foreign Affairs dated May 26, 1779. — ED.

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I begin now to think I was mistaken. It seems they cannot give up the pleasing idea of having at the end of the war one thousand Americans to hang for high treason. You were also long of opinion that the animosity against America was not national or general; but having seen the exterminating proclamation of the Commissioners approved by kings, lords, and commons, and that not attended by any marks of popular disapprobation, perhaps you too begin to think you are mistaken. I thank you for writing those excellent letters to your constituents. I like all but your reflections against the king of France for assisting us. In my mind, the coming to the relief of an innocent people under the bloody oppressions your ministers were exercising over them, and exposing himself and nation to a war on their account, was not only what any prince had a right to do for the sake of common humanity, but was a magnanimous and heroic action that is admired at present by the wise and good through all Europe, and will hand his name down with glory to posterity. Our different ways of thinking in this particular will not, however, diminish our private friendship, nor impair the sentiments of sincere esteem and respect with which I am ever, dear sir,

Yours,

B. FRANKLIN.

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945. TO MRS. MARGARET STEVENSON[1] (P. C.)

Jan 25, 1779.

IT is always with great Pleasure, when I think of our long continu'd Friendship, which had not the least Interruption

[1] From the original in the possession of T. Hewson Bradford, M.D. — ED.

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in the Course of Twenty Years (some of the happiest of my Life), that I spent under your Roof and in your Company. If I do not write to you as often as I us'd to do, when I happen'd to be absent from you, it is owing partly to the present Difficulty of sure Communication, and partly to an Apprehension of some possible Inconvenience, that my Correspondence might occasion you. Be assured, my dear Friend, that my Regard, Esteem, and Affection for you, are not in the least impair'd or diminish'd; and that, if Circumstances would permit, nothing would afford me so much Satisfaction, as to be with you in the same House, and to experience again your faithful, tender Care, and Attention to my Interests, Health, and Comfortable Living, which so long and steadily attach'd me to you, and which I shall ever remember with Gratitude.

I thought I had mention'd to you before, (and I believe I did, tho' my Letter may have miscarried,) that I had received the white Cloth Suit, the Sword, and the Saddle for Temple, all in good Order. I mention them now again, because Polly tells me you had not heard of their Arrival. And I repeat my Thanks for your Care in sending them. I wore the Clothes a good deal last Summer. There is one thing more, that I wish to have, if you should meet with an Opportunity of sending it. I mean the Copper Pot, lin'd with Silver, to roast Fowls in by means of a Heater.[1] I should also be glad of the Piece of Elephant's Tooth. It is old Ivory, perhaps of the time before the Flood, and

[1] Franklin when at Sheffield with Dr. Ingenhousz purchased a copper pot for roasting chickens by a bolt of iron. He erred in supposing that it was in the possession of Mrs. Stevenson in London, for it had really been carried to Vienna by Ingenhousz who in a letter dated May 25, 1779, promised to return the "roasting vessel." — Ed.

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would be a Rarity to some Friends here. But I doubt you will not be able to send them.

I rejoice to learn that your Health is establish'd, and that you live pleasantly in a Country Town, with agreable Neighbours, and have your Dear Children about you. My love to every one of them. I long to see them and you; but the Times do not permit me the Hope of it. Why do you never write to me? I us'd to love to read your Letters, and I regret your long Silence. They were season'd with good Sense and Friendship, and even your Spelling pleas'd me. Polly knows I think the worst spelling the best. I do not write to her by this Conveyance. You will let her know, that I acknowledge the Receipt of her pleasing Letter, dated the 11th Instant. I shall now only observe upon it, that I wonder how the patent came to be taken out in Jacob's Name. I am sure he had no Claim to it; for when I first propos'd to him the making of such Wheels at Mr. Viny's, in the Country, he objected to it as impracticable. But Mr. Viny, who seiz'd the Thought, and carried it into Execution, had certainly the best Right to the Patent. I wish he would send me a good Drawing, with the Proportions, of the little Carriage without Horses, which his Children came once in to see us. How do they all do, and particularly my little Patient *Bessum?*

Since my coming here, I have been told, that Mr. Henley,[1] the Linen-Draper, had said, on my going to America, that

[1] This is the William Henley or Henly who experimented in electricity and whose dismal exit from life was described by Benjamin Vaughan: see p. 410. He wrote to Franklin when the latter improved his electrometer, "If I have been able to produce any experiments in electricity which Dr. Franklin can vouchsafe to bestow the epithet curious upon, my highest ambition and Vanity is then satisfied and fully so" (January 29, 1771, A. P. S.).—Ed.

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I had gone away in his Debt. I can hardly believe it. Let me know if you have heard such a Thing, and what is the meaning of it. I thought he had been fully paid, and still think so, and shall, till I am assur'd of the contrary. Let me know, at the same time, how my Account stands with you.

You wish to know how I live. It is in a fine House, situated in a neat Village, on high Ground, half a Mile from Paris, with a large Garden to walk in. I have abundance of Acquaintance, dine abroad Six Days in seven. Sundays I reserve to dine at home, with such Americans as pass this Way; and I then have my Grandson Ben, with some other American Children from his school.

If being treated with all the Politeness of France, and the apparent Respect and Esteem of all Ranks, from the highest to the lowest, can make a Man happy, I ought to be so. Indeed, I have nothing to complain of, but a little too much Business, and the Want of that Order and Œconomy in my Family, that reign'd in it when under your prudent Direction. My Paper gives me only Room to add, that I am ever yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

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946. TO MESSRS. LLOYD AND OTHERS [1] (D. S. W.)

Passy, January 26, 1779.

GENTLEMEN: — We had yesterday the honour of your Letter of the 21st of this Month.

[1] Printed in "The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States," Wharton, Vol. III, p. 32. The letter was addressed to J. Lloyd, Daniel Blake, P. N. Fendall, J. Ross, Jo. Wharton, Lawrence Brooke, W. Blake, W. Thompson, N. Maese, Cha. Ogilvie, at Nantes.

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You desire to know what Port or Ports is or are made free pursuant to the Treaty. We believe that none have as yet been determined on. At present all the Ports of France are open, to American Vessels of all Denominations, and we are at present rather doubtful whether it would be politick in us to apply to have any distinction made. If the appointment of free Ports would relieve us from the Payment of Duties, of Import or Export, we should apply immediately. But as we apprehend, this Advantage would not be the Consequence, the Limits of the free Port would be prescribed, and the same Duties must be paid upon removing Goods within or without those Limits as are now paid upon Imports and Exports. Goods, however, might be brought into such free Ports from abroad, and there Landed and stored for a time, and then exported without paying Duties; but whether this would be any great Advantage to our Trade, at present, you are better Judges than we. We shall be glad of your Advice upon this Head, and if you think of any Advantages of considerable moment that would arise we shall be always ready to apply for such an Appointment. We are sorry it is not in our Power to give you any acceptable Information respecting the eighth Article of the Treaty, which relates to the Barbary corsaires. All we can say is, that we have applied to the Ministry upon this head some Months ago, and received Satisfactory Expressions of the Disposition of this Government to do everything which is stipulated in that Article of the Treaty. But some Things remain to be determined by Congress, to whom we have written on the Subject, and we must necessarily await their Instructions.

There are two Enquiries to be made, viz.: which of all the Nations who now Trade with France is the most favor'd?

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and what Duties are paid by that Nation? These Duties, and these only, we suppose, we are to pay; and as soon as Circumstances will permit, (two of us having been for a fortnight very ill, and one of us continuing so) we shall apply to the Ministry for an éclaircissement upon this Head, which we shall endeavour to communicate to you as soon as we shall obtain it.

We have received an Answer to our last Application for a Convoy from their Excellencies, the Count de Vergennes and M. de Sartine. But the Answers convinced us that M. de Sartine was under some Misinformation or Misunderstanding relative to the Business, which obliged us to write again. As soon as we shall be honor'd with an Answer, we will communicate the Result of it to you.

For the Commissioners, by B. FRANKLIN

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947. FROM DAVID HARTLEY TO B. FRANKLIN

(A. P. S.)

Jan. 23. 1779

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You know my constant and earnest desire for peace. You are so fully possessed of my principles upon these subjects, that you cannot doubt but that the sentiments expressed in the 4th letter on the American war, lately written by a member of Parliament in this country to his constituents, do perfectly accord with mine.

In your letter of 26th October 1778, you seem to express, that a visit from a friend would not be unwellcome, if that friend were in a character of a plenipotentiary, to treat of a sincere peace between all parties. You must know from the course of public transactions in England, that the alliance between France and America is a great stumblingblock. Whatever engagements America may have entered into, they may, at least by consent of parties, be relinquished for the purpose of removing so material an obstacle to any general treaty of free and unengaged parties. If the parties c'd meet for the sake of peace, upon free and open ground, I sh'd think that a very

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fair proposition to be offered to the people of England, and an equitable proposition in itself. The universal destruction attending war to all parties ought to be a motive for the restoration of peace, superceding all minute considerations. Knowing the sincerity of your desire for peace, I throw out to you the cursory thoughts, which present themselves to me, to take the chance of starting any idea, which may lead to that blessed end. I am yours affectionately,

G. B.

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948. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S. W.)

Passy, Feb. 3, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I have just received your favour of the 23d past, in which you mention, "that the alliance between France and America is the great StumblingBlock in the way of Making Peace;" and you go on to observe, that "whatever Engagements America may have entred into, they may, (at least by consent of Parties) *be relinquished*, for the purpose of removing so material an Obstacle to any general Treaty of free and unengaged Parties" adding, that "if the parties could meet for the sake of Peace upon *free* and *open* Ground, you should think *that* a very fair Proposition to be offered to the People of England, and an equitable Proposition in itself."

The long, steady, & kind regard you have shown for the Welfare of America, by the whole Tenour of your Conduct in Parliament, satisfies me, that this Proposition never took its Rise with you, but has been suggested from some other quarter; and that your Excess of Humanity, your Love of Peace, & your fears for us, that the Destruction we are threatened with will certainly be effected, have thrown a Mist before your Eyes, which hindred you from seeing the Malignity and Mischief of it. We know that your King hates Whigs

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and Presbyterians; that he thirsts for our Blood, of which he has already drunk large Draughts; that his servile unprincipled Ministers are ready to execute the wickedest of his Orders, and his venal Parliament equally ready to vote them just. Not the Smallest Appearance of a Reason can be imagined capable of inducing us to think of relinquishing a Solid Alliance with one of the most amiable, as well as most powerful Princes of Europe, for the Expectation of unknown Terms of Peace, to be afterwards offer'd to us by *such a government;* a Government, that has already shamefully broke all the Compacts it ever made with us! This is worse than advising us to drop the Substance for the Shadow. The Dog after he found his Mistake, might possibly have recover'd his Mutton; but we could never hope to be trusted again by France, or indeed by any other Nation under heaven. Nor does there appear any more Necessity for dissolving an Alliance with France before you can treat with us, than there would of dissolving your alliance with Holland, or your Union with Scotland, before we could treat with you. Ours is therefore no *material Obstacle* to a Treaty as you suppose it to be. Had Lord North been the Author of such a Proposition, all the World would have said it was insidious, and meant only to deceive & divide us from our Friends, and then to ruin us; supposing our Fears might be strong enough to procure an Acceptance of it; but thanks to God, that is not the Case! We have long since settled all the Account in our own Minds. We know the worst you can do to us, if you have your Wish, is to confiscate our Estates & take our Lives, to rob & murder us; and this you have seen we are ready to hazard, rather than come again under your detested Government.

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You must observe, my dear Friend, that I am a little warm. — Excuse me. — 'Tis over. — Only let me counsel you not to think of being sent hither on so fruitless an Errand, as that of making such a Proposition.

It puts me in mind of the comick Farce intitled, *God-send or The Wreckers.* You may have forgotten it; but I will endeavour to amuse you by recollecting a little of it.

SCENE. *Mount's Bay.*

[*A Ship riding at anchor in a great Storm. A Lee Shore full of Rocks, and lin'd with people, furnish'd with Axes & Carriages to cut up Wrecks, knock the Sailors on the Head, and carry off the Plunder; according to Custom.*]

1*st. Wrecker.* This Ship rides it out longer than I expected. She must have good Ground Tackle.

2 *Wrecker.* We had better send off a Boat to her, and persuade her to take a Pilot, who can afterwards run her ashore, where we can best come at her.

3 *Wrecker.* I doubt whether the boat can live in this Sea; but if there are any brave Fellows willing to hazard themselves for the good of the Public, & a double Share, let them say aye.

Several Wreckers. I, I, I, I.

[*The Boat goes off, and comes under the Ship's Stern.*]

Spokesman. So ho, the Ship, ahoa!

Captain. Hulloa.

Sp. Wou'd you have a Pilot?

Capt. No, no!

Sp. It blows hard, & you are in Danger.

Capt. I know it.

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Sp. Will you buy a better Cable? We have one in the boat here.

Capt. What do you ask for it?

Sp. Cut that you have, & then we'll talk about the price of this.

Capt. I shall not do such a foolish Thing. I have liv'd in your Parish formerly, & know the Heads of ye too well to trust ye; keep off from my Cable there; I see you have a mind to cut it yourselves. If you go any nearer to it, I'll fire into you and sink you.

Sp. It is a damn'd rotten French Cable, and will part of itself in half an hour. Where will you be then, Captain? You had better take our offer.

Capt. You offer nothing, you Rogues, but Treachery and Mischief. My cable is good & strong, and will hold long enough to baulk all your Projects.

Sp. You talk unkindly, Captain, to People who came here only for your Good.

Capt. I know you come for all our *Goods*, but, by God's help, you shall have none of them; you shall not serve us as you did the Indiaman.

Sp. Come, my Lads, let's be gone. This Fellow is not so great a Fool as we — took him to be.

[B. F.]

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949. TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS (D. S. W.)

Passy, Feb. 13, 1779.

DEAR COUSIN: — I have the pleasure of acquainting you that the Congress have been pleased to honour me with a sole appointment to be their Minister Plenipotentiary at

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this Court, and I have just received my Credentials. This Mark of public Confidence is the more agreable to me as it was not obtained by any Solicitation or Intrigue on my Part, nor have I ever written a Syllable to any Person, in or out of Congress, magnifying my own Services or diminishing those of others.

William Greene, Esq., present Gov^r^ of the State of Rhode Island, has sent me some Bills of Exchange, amounting to 1,080 Livres, which he desires may be laid out in the following Articles: one Piece dark Calico; one Piece Bedtick; best Silk Handkerchiefs and Linnen Do; Hollands, Cambricks, Muslins, Sewing Silk, and one Box of Window Glass, 7 Inches by 9. I send you this Commission, and desire you to forward the Things by the first good Opportunity, drawing upon me for the Money.

I am told you have laid aside your Thoughts of going to America at present, so that you will not have the Opportunity you wished for of settling your Accounts there. No Resolution has been yet taken by the Commissioners here relating to your Proposition of settling them by Arbitration at Nantes; and tho' I could now perhaps do by myself what is necessary to finish the Affair in that Way, yet as the Transactions were in their time, it seems to me most proper that they should consent to it.

I am ever your affectionate Uncle

B. FRANKLIN.

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950. TO COMTE DE VERGENNES (D. S. W.)

Passy, February 14, 1779.

SIR, — I have the honour to acquaint your Excellency that I have received from the Congress their appointment to be their minister plenipotentiary at this court, together with a letter of credence to be presented to his majesty. I beg thereupon your excellency's advice and direction.

I have need also of your counsel with regard to the trial and punishment of some conspirators on board our frigate, the *Alliance*, which is just arrived. I would have done myself the honour of waiting on your Excellency to-day, but am not quite well enough to go abroad in such weather.

I have received a number of letters from America, all expressing the highest esteem for the Count d'Estaing and the Marquis de la Fayette. As I think they will give you and M. de Sartine some pleasure, I send you the originals, praying only to have them returned.

I have the honour to be, etc. with the greatest respect,

[B. FRANKLIN.]

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951. TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS (D. S. W.)

Passy, Febr^{y} 19. 1779.

DEAR SIR, Since mine of the 11th inst. I have receiv'd an Appointment from Congress to be their sole Minister Plenipotentiary at this Court, my former Colleagues having or being likely to have, other Destinations.

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I have had frequent Conversations with your Friend concerning a Loan in Holland. A fit of the Gout has interrupted them these two Days, but his Demands appearing to be beyond my Powers, I have not agreed to them, and I question whether we can agree. I fancy he has had some Information of the Purport of some imprudent Letter you know of, & that he thinks our Necessities greater than they are. I begin to think it best to be oblig'd to one generous friend, and to take the little Aids we want from France only.

The Marquis de la Fayette is arriv'd, cover'd with Laurels. He and his suite speak very handsomely of the Americans & of the present Condition of our Affairs. All our Letters from different Persons in different Bodies, the Congress, the Army, the Government of separate States, are full of his Praises. By his Bravery & good Conduct he appears to have gain'd the Esteem & the Affection of that whole Continent.

I am with sincere Regard, etc.

[B. FRANKLIN.]

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952. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S. W.)

Passy, Feb. 22, 1779

DEAR SIR: — I received your Favour of Jan^{y} 23d, containing the Answer you had received from the Board of Sick and Hurt, in which they say they are taking Measures for the *immediate* Sending to France the Number of Americans first proposed to be changed, etc. I have heard nothing since of the Measures taken. The Prisoners grow more and more uneasy with us. They are told that we neglect them. We

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sent the Passport required in Sept. last. We were soon after assured that a Transport was actually taken up and victualled for 100 Men, to be sent to France with so many Prisoners. That Vessel has never appeared. We relyed on the Agreement to Exchange, and the Promise of doing it speedily, and we advised our People thereupon not to attempt Escapes. We seem to have been deceived or trifled with; but perhaps it is rather owing to the Multiplicity of Business the Board has on its hands, and your important Occupations not permitting you to follow it with such frequent sollicitations as are necessary to keep up its attention to this particular Affair. I have therefore thought of sending over a Person for that purpose, impowering him to stipulate in my Behalf what may be proper to remove little Obstacles readily, without the Delay attending Letters. By this means I would save you some of that Trouble which your Goodness and Humanity might otherwise continue to lead you on into. I would only desire you at present to procure a safe Conduct for the Person. His Name is Edward Bancroft. He is a Gentleman of Character and Honour, who will punctually observe such Restrictions respecting his Conduct when in England as it may be thought reasonable to lay him under. If this is or is not obtainable, I beg you will signify it by a Line directed for him at M. Leveaux's, Merchant in Calais; and *that* as soon as possible, that he may not be fruitlessly detained there in Expectation of it.

I have the honour to be, etc,

B. FRANKLIN.

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953. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S. W.)

Passy, Feb. 22, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I received your Proposition for removing the Stumbling-Block. Your constant Desires of Peace ought to endear you to both sides; but this Proposition seems to be naturally impracticable. We can never think of quitting a solid Alliance made and ratified, in order to be in a State for receiving unknown Proposals of Peace, which may vanish in the Discussion. The Truth is we have no kind of Faith in your Government, which appears to us as insidious and deceitful as it is unjust and cruel; its Character is that of the Spider in Thomson,

"Cunning and fierce,
Mixture abhorr'd!!"

Besides, we cannot see the Necessity of our relinquishing our Alliance with France in order to a Treaty, any more than of your relinquishing yours with Holland. I am ever, affectionately yours, N. A.[1]

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954. TO COMTE DE VERGENNES (D. S. W.)

Passy, Feb. 25, 1779

As the Enemy seem determin'd upon another Campaign, I beg leave to communicate and submit to your Excellency's Consideration some Sentiments of Congress on certain Operations in North America, which they conceive to be practicable

[1] North America. Franklin signed some of his letters to Hartley with these initials. — ED.

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and highly advantageous to the Interests both of France and the United States.

While the English continue to possess the Ports of Halifax, Rhode Island, and New York, they can —

1. Refit the Ships of War they employ in those Seas.

2. Defend more easily their Fishery, a great Nursery of Seamen and Source of Wealth.

3. Interrupt more effectually by their Cruisers the Commerce between France and America, which would otherwise be so advantageous to both, and also the Supplies of Provisions of various kinds, which the French Islands might draw from the continent.

Without a Naval Force, and in the present Situation of their Finances, the Reduction of some of those Posts must be extremely difficult, if not impossible.

If Troops should be intended for the Defence of your Sugar Islands, and the Reduction of those of the Enemy in the ensuing Winter it is suppos'd that a Part of them, 4 or 5000, convoy'd by Four Ships of the Line and a few Frigates, might be advantageously employ'd this Summer — first, by reducing (in Conjunction with the Troops of the Northern States) *Rhode Island.* This, it is conceiv'd, will require no long time, and being done, those States, eased by that means, will find themselves at liberty to afford some Aid of Men, Transports, Provisions, etc., in reducing Halifax, and there is no reason to doubt their hearty good-Will to concur in such an Enterprize, the Success of which would free their Coasts from the grievous Restraints under which both their Commerce and their Fisheries at present labour. The Inhabitants of Nova Scotia, too, except those in the Town of Halifax, are known to be generally well affected to the American Cause,

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being mostly Settlers who formerly emigrated from New England.

— Halifax being reduced, the small Forts on Newfoundland would easily follow, and by this means the Enemy's Fishery, not only for this Year would be broken up, but render'd so precarious from the Interruptions by our armed Vessels, or so expensive by the Force necessary to defend their Fishermen, that it must soon be discouraged, diminished, and at length abandoned; their naval Strength, of course, much lessened, and that of France in proportion augmented.

It is supposed that the Troops, being after these northern Operations refreshed in New England, and well supply'd with fresh Provisions, might proceed at the Approach of Winter for the West Indies, in good Health, and fit for such Service as may be required there.

The Congress had Thoughts of attacking Canada this Summer, and requesting some Aid of Ships and Men for that purpose; but as their Paper-Money is not current in that Country where hard Money alone can procure Provisions, which must for want of such Money be brought at a vast Expence from the United States, and being salted is not so good for the Men, it is uncertain whether that Expedition will be attempted. There is, however, to encourage it, a good Disposition in the Inhabitants, and if it succeeded, the Fur Trade and a great Vent for her Manufactures would be opened to France; her Fisheries would be more easily protected; and the Frontiers of the States being secured, their Agriculture might again be pursued in those parts, and the general Strength employed where the interest of the Alliance might require it.

The Congress have made no Mention to me of their Views

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with regard to New York. Perhaps they hope that the Enemy will abandon it, or that they shall be able to reduce it by Gen. Washington's Army.

The Commissioners here had, before the Treaty, the Honour of making, in a Memorial to your Excellency, the following Proposition by order of Congress, viz: "That in case it is agreed that the Conquest of the British Sugar Islands be attempted, the United States, shall, on timely Notice, furnish Provisions for the Expedition to the Amount of two millions of Dollars, with Six Frigates manned, of not less than 22 Guns each, with such other Assistance as may be in their Power, and as becoming good Allies." As soon as they shall be, by the Aids above-mentioned, happily freed from the Embarassments occasioned by the Lodgments of the Enemy on their Coasts, it will be in their Power to assist much more amply in such an Expedition than they can at present. And I may assure your Excellency that they will do their utmost to fulfil the Expectations given by that Memorial, tho' the Losses in their Marine, and the Depreciation of their Currency since, may render it more difficult.

I need not intimate to your Excellency the great Utility, if such joint Operations or Expeditions should be agreed to, of appointing Commanders of conciliating Tempers, and if possible, who know and esteem each other, and are acquainted with both the Languages. By this means the little Misunderstandings apt to arise between Troops of different Nations might be prevented or soon remov'd, and thence a greater Probability of Success in their Enterprises.

I have the honour to be, with the utmost Esteem and Respect, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble Servant, B. F.

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955. TO COMTE DE VERGENNES (D. S. W.)

Passy, February 25, 1779

SIR: — I received duly your Excellency's most obliging letter of the 17th inst. I was then so ill with the gout and a fever that I could neither write nor think of any thing. This necessarily prevented my attending at court to present my letters of credence on Tuesday last agreeable to his Majesty's gracious permission; but as the fit seems to be going off, I hope that in two or three days I shall be able to pay my respects to your Excellency at Versailles.

I thank your Excellency for your kind notice of the affairs of Capt. McNeill.

I have ordered the *Alliance* frigate to prepare for returning immediately to America, in order to convoy thither about fifteen sail of ships going from Nantes. As this ship is said to be an admirable swift sailor, I mention her as an opportunity by which despatches may probably go safely. If your Excellency should think fit to write by her.

With the most perfect respect I have the honour to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

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956. TO PATRICK HENRY (A. P. S.)

Passy, February 26, 1779.

SIR,

I had the Honour of receiving your Excellency's Letter of March 3, 1778, by Capt. Lemaire, acquainting me, that your State [1] had desired Mr. William Lee, your Agent, to procure a

[1] Patrick Henry was at this time Governor of Virginia. — ED.

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Quantity of Arms and military Stores, and requesting me to assist him with my Influence in obtaining them on Credit.

Being glad of any Opportunity of serving Virginia, and showing my Regard to the Request of a Person I so highly esteem, and Mr. W. Lee being absent, I found immediately three different Merchants here, Men of Fortune, who were each of them willing to undertake furnishing the whole, and giving the Credit desired. But Mr. Arthur Lee being understood to have taken the Management of the Affair into his own Hands, one of the three soon after refused in that Case to have any thing to do with it; a second, whose Letter to me I enclose, apprehending Difficulties from Mr. Lee's Temper, required my Name and Mr. Adams's to the Agreement, which he supposes Mr. Lee did not like, as his Offer was not accepted. I know not why the Offer of the third was not taken. I was afterwards not at all consulted in the Business.

Poor Lemaire was sent about Germany to find Goods and Credit, which consum'd a great deal of Time to little purpose. Several of the Manufacturers wrote to me, that they would furnish him on my Promise of Payment. I referred them to Mr. Lee. On his return, Mr. Lee and he differ'd about his Expences. He complain'd frequently to me of Mr. Lee's not supplying him with necessary Subsistence, and treating him with great Haughtiness and Insolence. I thought him really attentive to his Duty, and not well us'd, but I avoided meddling with his Affairs, to avoid, if possible, being engag'd in Quarrels myself. Mr. Lee, in fine, contracted with Messrs. Penet and Dacosta[2] to supply great Part of the Goods. They too have differed, and I have several letters of

[1] Members of the mercantile firm of "Plairne, Penet & Co." (Nantes). — ED.

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Complaints from those Gentlemen; but I cannot remedy them, for I cannot change Mr. Lee's Temper.

They have offered to send the Things you want and which he has refus'd, on my Account; but, not knowing whether he has not provided them elsewhere, or in what light he may look upon my concerning myself with what he takes to be his Business, I dare not meddle, being charg'd by the Congress to endeavour at maintaining a good Understanding with their other Servants, which is, indeed, a hard task with some of them. I hope, however, that you will at length be provided with what you want, which I think you might have been long since, if the Affair had not been in Hands, which Men of Honour and Candour here are generally averse to dealing with, as not caring to hazard Quarrels and Abuses in the Settlement of their Accounts.

Our Public Affairs at this Court continue to go on well. Peace is soon expected in Germany, and we hope Spain is now near declaring against our Enemies. I have the honour to be, with great Respect,

Your Excellency's most
obedient and most humble Servant
B. FRANKLIN.

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957. TO JEAN DE NEUFVILLE (A. P. S.)

Paris ce 28 fevrier 1779

Quelque désir que j'aie, Monsieur, de profiter de la bonne volonté que vous témoignez pour vous charger de négocier un emprunt de 1500 mil florins; l'état actuel des affaires ne me permet pas de prendre aucun engagement avec vous à ce

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sujet dans ce moment-ci. L'emprunt que nous avons ouvert l'année dernière en Hollande n'ayant pas été acceuilli, j'ai lieu de craindre qu'un nouvel emprunt ne le soit pas mieux, et que cette seconde tentative manquée ne porte un préjudice réel au crédit et à la dignité des États Unis de l'Amérique que j'ai l'honneur de répresénter; si cependant par votre crédit et vos bons offices, vous parvenez à nous assurer d'un nombre suffisant de souscripteurs, vous pouvez compter, Monsieur, que je vous enverrai aussitôt les préliminaires proposés par M. de Chaumont. C'est à dire j'ai l'honneur d'etre très parfaitement Monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant Serviteur.

B. FRANKLIN

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958. TO COMTE DE VERGENNES (D. S. W.)

Passy, March 9, 1779.

SIR, — It is with great Reluctance that I give your Exᵉʸ any farther Trouble on the Subject of a Loan of Money. But the Bearer, Mr. Grand, who is much better acquainted with the Nature & Manner of such Operations than I am, being of Opinion that the sum we want might with your Permission & Countenance be procur'd in France, I beg you would be so good as to hear him upon the Subject, both of the Necessity of obtaining such a Loan, & of the Means of accomplishing it.

I am ever, etc.,

[B. FRANKLIN.]

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959. PASSPORT FOR CAPTAIN COOK[1] (L. C.)

To all Captains and Commanders of armed Ships acting by Commission from the Congress of the United States of America, now in war with Great Britain.

Gentlemen,

A Ship having been fitted out from England before the Commencement of this War, to make Discoveries of new Countries in Unknown Seas, under the Conduct of that most celebrated Navigator and Discoverer Captain Cook; an Undertaking truly laudable in itself, as the Increase of Geographical Knowledge facilitates the Communication between distant Nations, in the Exchange of useful Products and Manufactures, and the Extension of Arts, whereby the common Enjoyments of human Life are multiply'd and augmented, and Science of other kinds increased to the benefit of Mankind in general; this is, therefore, most earnestly to recommend to every one of you, that, in case the said Ship, which is now expected to be soon in the European Seas on her Return, should happen to fall into your Hands, you would not consider her as an Enemy, nor suffer any Plunder to be made of the Effects contain'd in her, nor obstruct her immediate Return to England, by detaining her or sending

[1] The generosity of Franklin in issuing this passport was gratefully recognized by the British government, when, by the hand of Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society, one of the gold medals struck in honour of Captain Cook was presented to Dr. Franklin. The Admiralty Board also sent him a copy of Cook's "Voyage" "accompanied with the elegant collection of plates, and a very polite letter from Lord Howe, signifying that the present was made with the king's express approbation" (W. T. F.). — ED.

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her into any other Part of Europe or to America, but that you would treat the said Captain Cook and his People with all Civility and Kindness, affording them, as common Friends to Mankind, all the Assistance in your Power, which they may happen to stand in need of. In so doing you will not only gratify the Generosity of your own Dispositions, but there is no doubt of your obtaining the Approbation of the Congress, and your other American Owners. I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your most obedient humble Servant.

[Given] at Passy, near Paris, this 10th day of March, 1779.

B. FRANKLIN,

Plenipotentiary from the Congress of the United States to the Court of France.

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960. TO MM. HILLS, PARKES, ADAMS, DEGGE, BUCKLEY, ELWOOD, AND WARREN, OFFICERS ON BOARD THE *ALLIANCE*

(D. S. W.)

Passy, March 11, 1779.

GENTLEMEN, I received your Letters of the 7th of February and 2d of March. The Application to me either for Advance of Cash or Payment of Wages to Officers in the Continental Service is quite irregular, as I am neither furnish'd with Money nor Authority for such Purposes. And I believe it is the Constant Practice with all maritime Powers to pay the Ships in their Service at home on their Return, and not in foreign Countries. I am sensible however

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of some Hardships in your present Circumstances relative to the high Price of Cloathing in America, and as I respect your Zeal for your Country and Readiness to engage in its Defence, and hope I shall on those Acc^ts^ be excused in doing it, I have this Day, in a Letter to the Agent at Nantes, given leave to advance to each of you, and also to the warrant officers, a decent Suit of Clothing, suitable to your respective Stations. But I must recommend it to you, and I flatter myself that you will not take it amiss, to be as frugal as possible for your own Sakes, and not make yourselves expensively fine from a Notion that it is for the honour of the States you serve. It seems not necessary that young & poor States, labouring, as at present, under the Distresses of a most burthensome War in Defence of their Liberties, should vie in the Dress of their Officers with ancient and wealthy Kingdoms who are in full Prosperity. The honour of the States will be better supported by the prudent Conduct of their Officers, their Harmony with each other, their ready Obedience to the Commands of superior Officers, their reasonable & kind Treatment of Inferiors, and above all, their Bravery in fight & Humanity to those they conquer. I am confident that you, Gentlemen, have the same Sentiments. If it should be in my Power to do any thing further for you before you go, it will give me Pleasure. But expecting daily a great Number of Prisoners in Exchange from England, who will be in Want of every thing, and our Funds here being low, I doubt it can be but little. The greater Advances made to the officers of the *Boston* at Bordeaux by the Agent, which you mention as an Example, were without Orders from the Commissioners here, and were much disapprov'd when we saw the Accounts. I wish that something handsome may

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fall into your Hands on your Return, and that you may have a happy sight of your Friends & Country. I am, Gentlemen

Your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

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961. TO ARTHUR LEE (D. S. W.)

Passy, March 13. 1779.

SIR: — Finding by a Note of yours on the Back of Mr. William's Acct, dated Oct. 6, but which I never saw till lately by Accident, expressing that you are "perfectly satisfy'd, from his own Acct, that Mr. Williams has now, and has long had, in his Hands upwards of an hundred thousand Livres belonging to the public which have not been employ'd in the public Use," etc., I have resolved to have those Accounts carefully examined by impartial Persons, skilled in such Business; and if you have any other Objection to them than what appears in your Note, or any other Reasons than what appears upon the face of his Acct, for believing such a Sum in Mr. William's Hands, I beg you will furnish me with them, that I may communicate them to the Examiners. I wish Justice to be done, and that you had shown your Note either to Mr. Adams or me when you made it; the Matter would not have been so long neglected. The Money, if due, ought to be recover'd immediately.

I have the Honour to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. — The Persons I have requested to examine the Acct

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are the American Merchants now at Nantes with our deputed Commercial Agent, Mr. Schweighauser.

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962. TO ARTHUR LEE (L. C.)

Passy, March 13, 1779

SIR: — A severe Fit of the Gout, with too much Business at the same time necessary to be done, has prevented till now my answering yours of the 21st past.

I did not imagine there would have been any Difference of Sentiment between us concerning the Propriety of returning to me the Papers which you have at various times taken from this House. Where several Persons join'd in the same Commission are to act upon Papers, it seems necessary that they should be lodg'd in one Place, where all the Parties may be sure of finding them, and under the care of one Person who should be accountable for them. And if there were not some particular Reasons to influence another Choice, I should suppose the first Person named in the Commission might with great Propriety take charge of them. I am sure that if you had been that Person, I should have made no Objection to it. Mr. Adams having a Room more convenient and more private than mine, and in which he lodg'd, I approved of his keeping the Papers; he has voluntarily return'd me all he had without asking, and I thought Asking was only necessary to obtain the rest from you; for the whole Business, which before was transacted by us jointly being now devolved on me, and as there must be frequent Occasion to look back on Letters receiv'd, Memorials deliver'd, Ac-

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counts given in, Contracts made, etc., etc., which, if I cannot have the Opportunity of doing, I must be frequently at a Loss in future transactions. I did not imagine I should have any Difficulty in obtaining them; nor had I the least Idea that my asking for them would occasion any Dispute.

I suppose that the Papers Mr. Deane mentions to have taken and secur'd were those only that related to his separate commercial Transactions for the Publick before his Appointment with us in the political Commission. If he took away any of the Papers we were jointly concern'd in, I conceive he was wrong in doing so, and that his doing wrong would not justify the rest of us in following his Example. I can have no Desire to deprive you of any Paper that may be of Use to you in answering Mr. Deane's Accusations, having no Concern in them nor Interest in Supporting them; on the contrary, if any Papers remaining in my hands can be of such use to you, you are welcome to have authenticated Copies of them (which shall on request be made out for you), as well as of any others "evidencing our joint Transactions" which you may desire. On the whole it seems to me that this Matter may be reasonably settled by your keeping, if you please, all those Originals of which there are Duplicates at Passy, retaining for a time such of the rest as you desire to copy, which Copies, being compar'd by us with the Originals, may be authenticated by our joint Signatures; and returning immediately all the others, docketed and catalogu'd, as you please, so as that you may know what and where they are, and call for a Copy of any of them you may hereafter have Occasion for, which shall always be given you.

If these Propositions are agreed to, the Affair may soon be settled; if not, I must wait the Orders of Congress, and in

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the meantime do as well as I can with their Business, which, I think, must often suffer by my want of the Knowledge those Papers might occasionally furnish me with.

I have the honour to be with great Respect, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

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963. FROM JOHN PAUL JONES TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN [1] (A. P. S.)

L' Orient March 6th 1779

HONORED AND DEAR SIR,

The mystery which you so delicately mention in your much esteemed favor of the 24th Ult. — it has been my intention for more than Twelve Months past to communicate to you; which however I have put off from time to time on reflecting that the Account must give you more pain than pleasure: — yet had I not, on my sudden departure from hence for Paris, inadvertently neglected to take with me the Original Paper whereof the inclosed is a Copy, I certainly should then have put it into your hands. — The subject at the beginning of the War was communicated to Sundry members of Congress among whom I may mention Mr Hewes of No. Carolina and Mr Morris of Philadelphia; and to various other persons in America before and Since. — It was the advice of my friends Govr Young among many others, when that great Misfortune of my Life happened, that I should retire Incog to the continent of America, and remain there until an Admiralty Commission should arrive in the Island, and then return. — I had waited that event Eighteen Months before Swords were drawn and the Ports of the Continent were Shut.

It had been my intention from the time of my misfortune to quit the Sea Service altogether, and, after standing Trial, as I had the means, to purchase some small tracts of Land on the Continent, which had been my favorite Country from the age of thirteen, when I first saw it. — I had settled my future place of retirement in "calm contemplation and Poetic ease." — But the revolution in America deranged everything — and the person with whom I had *in Trust* left a considerable part of my Effects in the West Indies, had while the ports were open shewn very little inclination to make me proper Remittances. — Many of my friends had expressed their fears that he meant to abuse my confidence and take advantage of my situation. Among these I can mention a person whom I very much esteem, and who has always expressed great Obligation to you I mean Doctor John K. Read of Goochland

[1] See Introductory Note. — ED.

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County Virginia. I was not however undeceived until after the Ports were Shut.

I had made the Art of War by Sea in some degree my Study, and been fond of a Navy from my boyish days up. — Knowing the perfidy and ingratitude of Dunmore, as soon as an expidition was adopted against him from Philadelphia by sea; I had the honor to be appointed Senior Lieutenant in the Navy of the Colonies which was then established under Hopkins. — I need not observe that as I had not then heard the doctrine of Independence even in a whisper, and that as the Pamphlet called common Sense did not appear till a considerable time afterwards, I could have no Views of protection from a new Government; and therefore as I adhered to my first resolution of returning to the West Indies, to Stand Trial, and to Settle my affairs there as soon as peace should be restored to the Continent, it was the advice of my friends that I should till that wish'd event might be brought about, remain Incog. — Within a few Months after my first appointment as a proof of the public approbation of my conduct, I had the honour to receive a Captains Commission, without my having either said or written a single word in my own favour to any person either in or out of Congress. — In the character of an American Officer, I think you are convinced that Gain has not been the object of my pursuit. — I shall say nothing either of my Abilities (if I have any) or of my Services. — It is the province of others to determine the merits of both. — I have received no pecuniary gratification whatsoever, not even the expenses of my daily Dinner, from the publick Funds. — On the contrary I have disbursed for the public Service, when our prospects were at the worst, considerable Sums of my private fortune, which has never yet been repaid. — But I have always acknowledged that Congress have far more than rewarded my poor endeavours; by the generous and unsolicited attentions, and by the Confidential preferences which I have So often had the honour to experience in their appointments, and I hope at least, never to tarnish the honour of the American Flag.

It may be said that I have been unfortunate — but it can not be made appear that I have ever, even in the weakest Moment of my Life been capable of a Base or a mean Action. — Nature has kindly given me a Heart that is heighly susceptible of the finer feelings — and I have endeavoured to watch over the happiness of my poor Relations *Unseen*. — For that purpose I sent several little remittances (Bills) from America *in Trust* to a very worthy friend of mine Captain Plaince of Cork to be applied for their use without their having the pain of knowing from whence: But to my great sorrow I find they have all miscarried — the letters that contained them some of them having been Sunk, the rest taken on the passage. — I brought no funds with me to Europe and since my Arrival in it you know my hands have been Tied. — My Will, now in the hands of Mr Morris, will evince that I have not been unmindful of the duties which I owe to Nature and, were it equally in my

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power, I think Pope himself could not have taken more pleasure than I should "to Rock the Cradle of declining Age" —

In short, however chequered my fortune may have been I feel no Sentiment in my Breast that can ever make me wish to conceal any event of my Life from persons of Candour and Ingenuity — therefore you are at perfect liberty to communicate my Story to whom you think proper, and particularly to Doctor Bancroft. — I am, and shall be always, ready to give every explanation that you can require.

With respect to Lord Selkirks plate, it is my wish to restore it *to the Lady* from whom it was taken. — When I wrote to her I expected that the plate had been of far more Value than it really is — But since you agree to restore the one half in the Name of the Continent — and as I feel myself above the Idea of receiving any Profit from such a Pillage — I hope Lord Selkirk will gratify me so far as to Suffer the Plate to be restored. — I claim no merit in this, nor has it been my intention to attract his notice either by my history or otherwise, except only as far as he might have been concerned in my Scheme of bringing about an exchange of Prisoners. — If however his delicacy will not suffer him to receive what he thinks an Obligation from me — it will be no difficult matter to point out to him, if he should be at a loss, how to discharge that Obligation. — How Lord Selkirk came to renew his correspondence with Mr Alexander, and on that — particular Subject too, appears to me rather Surprising. — While I was at Passy in the Summer, Mr Alexander asked me several questions about the landing on St. Mary's Isle — to gratify him I shewed him a Copy of my letter to the Countess. — He invited me to dine with him and Said "he would keep the Copy among the Papers which he most esteemed" — I remember also that in the course of the day he complained that Lord Selkirk had taken great offense at some freedom of Sentiment which had marked his letters, and that in consequence they had not corresponded for a great while past. — I remember too that he has frequently, by appearing to disclose his own Plans in some Measure, endeavoured to fish out Mine. — Mrs Amiel has told me often that he is my Enemy. — Yet why he should be so I cannot imagine, as I never gave him Cause. — But this I know, that let them place round me as many Spies as they please — as I have no Confidants near me, and as I do not keep my intentions by me in writing, they cannot betray my Councils — and I may yet appear in a quarter of the Globe which they little imagine.

The inclosed little correspondence between Mr Schweighauser and myself on the Subject of the Plate I send to you to shew that he makes difficulties where there are none. — You will perhaps see fit to send him orders in consequence, as I have not to this moment rec^{d} payment of my claim to the Prizes which have been in his hands.

Mr Williams did me the honour to shew me the first paragraph of your letter on the Subject of your Appointment as sole American Ambassador at

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the Court of Versailles. — I believe that appointment to have been unsolicited on your part, and I am sure that you are above writing any thing that could tend either to magnify the merit of your own Services or to diminish that of others. — In the fullness of my heart I congratulate you on your well merited appointment, and I trust you will believe me that I do now and ever shall rejoice in every circumstance that tends to the honour or happiness of a great and good Man, who has taught me as well as his Country to regard him with a Veneration and Affection which proceeds directly from the Heart, and that is due only to the best of Friends.

The outfit of the Poor Richard has engaged my whole attention since I returned him. — I received this day 33 Seamen from Brest, and Volunteers for soldiers enlist with me daily to serve for three years or during the War. — I have found several and hope soon to have a full set of Brave and deserving Men, for officers. — their Names &c I will send up to you. — I find myself under the necessity of taking a journey to Bordeaux to give directions about the Set of Cannon that are to be made there for the Poor Richard. — I shall set out after to morrow, and as I return immediately may I hope to be favoured with a letter from you to meet me at Nantes on my way Back.

I hope nothing will prevent Doctor Bancroft from going to England on the Exchange of Prisoners.

I am with greatful and real affection and respect

Honored and dear Sir,
Your very Obliged
very obedient
very humble Servant
JNO. P. JONES

[P. S.] The Master of a West India Ship from London had occasion to ship sundry seamen at the Island where he landed — one of whom in particular behaved himself very ill — He was a — principal in Embezzling the Masters Liquor — He got frequently Drunk — He neglected and even refused his duty with much insolence. — He Stirred up the rest of the Crew to act in the Same manner and was their avowed Ringleader.

As the Masters engagements were of such a Nature that his all depended upon despatch, he gave his Crew very reasonable Encouragement. — They had plenty of good Provision and were in other respects well used. — Notwithstanding of which one forenoon when the Master came on Board that the Crew had formed or were then forming a plot to desert the ship. — As the Master was walking aft the Ringleader rushed up from the Steerage and stopped him with the grosest abuse that vulgarism could dictate — because, as he pretended, the Master had Sailed his ship fourteen Months without paying wages. — The fellow having some time before complained that he wanted Cloaths, the — Master now gave him Frocks and Trousers telling him to go about his duty and to inform himself better — for that what he had

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said was not so. — But mildness had no good effect, for while the Master was distributing Cloathing to some of the rest who were also in want, the first conveyed his things into the Boat and another of the Crew was following his example, till observing that the Master had an Eye upon their proceedings they Sneaked back into the ship. — They remained quiet for a short space — But the Ringleader soon broke out again with Oaths and insisted on having the Boat and quiting the Ship. — This the Master Refused, but offered to give up his agreement if a Man could be found to serve in his Room. The disturber Swore with horrid imprications that he would take away the Boat by force! — And for that purpose actually rushed over the Gangway, bidding the Master the most contemptuous defiance! — Upon the Masters Stepping up to prevent this the Man (having threw his strength) leapt into the Ship and forced him into the Cabin, using at the time language and attitudes too indecent to be mentioned, and charging him not to Shew his Nose upon Deck again till the Boat was gone at his utmost Peril. — The Master searched the Cabin for a Stick, but not finding one, and his Sword, by chance being on the Table, he took it up in hopes that the sight of it would intimidate the Man into Submission. — The Man had by this time descended the Gangway within a step of the Boat, so that it would have been impossible to prevent his Elopement had he persisted. — But he now reentered the Ship breathing Vengeance, and, totally regardless of the Sword, tho within its reach, turned his back towards the Master, ran on the Main Deck, Armed himself with a Bludgeon with which he returned to the quarter Deck and attacked the Master. — The Master was thunder Struck with Surprise, for he had considered the Man's ravings as the natural effect of disappointed Rage which would soon subside of itself. — But now his sole expedient was to prevent bad consequences by returning again to the Cabin; — and this he endeavoured to do as fast as possible by retiring backwards in a posture of defence. — But alas! what is human foresight. — The after Hatchway was uncovered and lay in a direct line between the Master's back and the Cabin door, but the momentary duration of the attack did not admit of his recollecting that circumstance before his heel came in contact with the Hatchway, which obliged him to make a — Sudden Stop. — Unhappily at that instant the assailants arm being high raised, he threw his Body forward to reach the Master's head with the descending Blow — The fatal and unavoidable consequence of which was his rushing upon the Swords Point.

After this melancholy accident the Master went Publickly to a Justice of the Peace and offered to Surrender as his Prisoner. — The Justice who called himself the Masters friend, persuaded him to withdraw and Said it was unnecessary to Surrender before the day of Trial. — And the rest of the Masters friends who were present forced him to mount his Horse. — Two weeks before this the Chief Mate had been for the first time in his Life advanced to that Station — and yet unworthy as his conduct had been in it he now openly Arro-

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gated his unblushing pretentions to the Command, and to attain it associated with the Crew. The Testimony of such a combination may easily be imagined, conscious as they were of having embezzled the Masters property they were not likely to dwell on any circumstance that manifested their own dastardly and undutiful Conduct. — And as the second Mate a young Gentleman of worth lay Sick as well as all the inferior Officers and best disposed of the Crew, in all human probability the Truth could not escape the grossest perversions. — Besides the Nature of the Case Subjected it to the cognizance of a Court Martial — And there was no Admiral'ty Commission then in the Government. — For these obvious reasons the Masters friends constrained him for a time to leave the Country.

N.B. The foregoing has been written in great haste to Save the Post.

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964. TO JOHN PAUL JONES (D. S. W.)

Passy, March 14. 1779

DEAR SIR

I yesterday rec'd your favour of the 4th inst. I did not understand from M. Alexander that Lord Selkirk had any particular Objection to receiving the Plate from you. It was general, that tho' he might not refuse it if offer'd him by a public Body, as the Congress, he cou'd not accept it from any private Person whatever. I know nothing of M. Alexander's having any Enmity to you, nor can I imagine any Reason for it. But on the whole it seems to me not worth your while to give yourself any farther Trouble about Lord Selkirk. You have now the Disposal of what belongs to the Congress; and may give it with your own Share, if you think fit, in little Encouragements to your men on particular Occasions.

I thank you for your kind Congratulations on my particular Appointment. It will give me more Satisfaction if it enables me to be more useful.

We cou'd not obtain a Passport for Dr Bancroft. We were

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told it was needless, as the Cartel Ship was actually sail'd for Plymouth to take in the first 100 Americans to be brought to Nantes or l'Orient. Inclos'd is a Copy of a Letter from the Board to M. Hartley. I wish they may be arriv'd and that you may obtain such of them as you think proper. Possibly the Alliance which wants Hands may endeavour to engage some. Mr. Adams goes over in her; and I must not interfere, but leave you to scramble for the Men. I think, however, that if the Cartel comes to l'Orient you will have the best Chance.

I have look'd over the Copy of my Letter to you of Feb^{y} 24, not being able to imagine what Part of it could give you the Idea that I hinted at an Affair I never knew. Not finding anything in the Letter, I suppose it must have been the Postscript of which I have no Copy, and which I know now that you could not understand — tho' I did not when I wrote it. The story I alluded to is this: L'Abbé Rochon had just been telling me & Madame Chaumont that the old Gardiner & his Wife had complained to the Curate, of your having attack'd her in the Garden about 7 o'clock the evening before your Departure, and attempted to ravish her relating all the Circumstances, some of which are not fit for me to write. The serious Part of it was y^{t} three of her Sons were determin'd to kill you, if you had not gone off; the Rest occasioned some Laughing; for the old Woman being one of the grossest, coarsest, dirtiest & ugliest that we may find in a thousand, Madame Chaumont said it gave a high Idea of the Strength of Appetite & Courage of the Americans. A Day or two after, I learnt y^{t} it was the femme de Chambre of Mademoiselle Chaumont who had disguis'd herself in a Suit, I think, of your Cloaths, to divert herself under that Masquerade,

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as is customary the last evening of Carnival: and that meeting the old Woman in the Garden, she took it into her Head to try her Chastity, which it seems was found Proof.

As to the unhappy Affair of which you give me an Acc[t], there is no Doubt but the Facts being as you state 'em, the Person must have been acquitted if he had been tried, it being merely *se defendendo.*

I wish you all imaginable Success in your present Undertaking, being ever with sincere Esteem, etc.

[B. FRANKLIN.]

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965. TO RICHARD OLIVER [1] (D. S. W.)

Passy, March 14, 1779.

DEAR SIR: — It will always be a Pleasure to me to do what may be agreeable to you, inclos'd is the Passport you desire. I wish you & your Friends a prosperous Voyage; being ever with the sincerest Esteem, Dear Sir, etc.,

[B. FRANKLIN.]

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966. PASSPORT FOR RICHARD OLIVER (D. S. W.)

To all Captains and Commanders of Vessels of War, Privateers, and Letters of Marque Belonging to the United States of America.

Gentlemen: — I do hereby certify to you that I have long & intimately known the Bearer, Rich[d] Oliver, Esq.;

[1] Richard Oliver (1734?–1784), member of Parliament for the city of London (1770–1780). "His name appears for the last time in the 'Parliamentary History' on 10 May 1776, when he seconded Sawbridge's resolution

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Member of Parliament, & late Alderman of London,[1] & have ever found him a sincere & hearty Friend to the Cause of Liberty and of America; of which he has given many substantial Proofs on various Occasions. Therefore, if by the Chance of War he should in his Voyage from England to the West Indies happen to fall into your Hands, I recommend him warmly, with the Friends that may accompany him, to your best Civilities, requesting that you would afford your generous Protection to their Persons, & favour them with their Liberty when a suitable Opportunity shall offer. In this I am sure your Conduct will be approv'd by the Congress and your Employers, and you will much oblige (if that be any Motive), Gentlemen,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

At Passy, near Paris, this 14th day of March, 1779.

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967. TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS (D. S. W.)

Passy, March 16, 1779.

DEAR JONATHAN, Agreeable to your Desire, I have requested the American Gentlemen residing at Nantes to examine your Accounts. I have added Mr. Schweighauser, he having been appointed by my former Colleagues to manage our Affairs there, and may be supposed interested particularly

that the American colonies should 'be continued upon the same footing of giving and granting their money as his Majesty's subjects in Ireland are, by their own representatives'" (G. F. Russell Barker in "Dictionary of National Biography"). — ED.

[1] He resigned his gown at a court of aldermen held at Guildhall, November 25, 1778. — ED.

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to do Justice to the Congress. And the others, I imagine, can have no Interest in favouring you, as perhaps you may stand in their Way respecting Business. Inclos'd you have Copies of my Letter to the Gentlemen, and of another on the same Business to Mr. Lee. If I had known of his going to Nantes I should have desired him to state his Objections to the Acc^ts there, but I did not hear of his being there till a Day or two before his return. I have yet no Answer from him.

I show'd your Letter of Feb^y 20 relating to Mr. Simeon Deane's[1] Goods, to Mr. Adams, who thought the Proposition reasonable. I send by this Opportunity an Order to Mr. Schweighauser to deliver to you the Case which remains; and if you will send me the original Invoice and the form of the Bills you propose, I shall sign and return them, — if no Objection arises on signing them that does not at Present occur to me.

I suppose you settled the Affair yourself with Mercier's Agent, as he took the Papers from me saying that he was going to Nantes. This was before I received yours of Feb^y 23 relating to that Business.

I received the Bond for Collas'[2] Commission.

The following Bills, drawn before the 12th of December in favour of William Dennie, were presented and accepted on the 19 of Febru^y last, viz.: Dollars 600, 12, 600, 30, 120, 12, 120, — in all 1494 Dollars. These may possibly be a Part of those you mention. I shall order Payment to be stopt till I have examined the Indorsements, tho' I am not sure that I can well refuse Payment after having accepted them. We shall strictly examine such Drafts in favour of

[1] Brother of Silas and Barnabas Deane. — ED.

[2] Son-in-law of Mrs. Jane Mecom. See letter to Mrs. Collas, 1789. — ED.

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Dennie as may appear hereafter, till you let us know farther.

I return Dr. Cooper's Letter, with Thanks to you for communicating it. I am much obliged to that good Man for his kind expressions of Regard to me.

The Tobacco which came in the *Bergère*, and all the Tobacco which comes to us from America, is to be delivered directly out of the Ships to the Agents of the Farmers-General, in the Ports where it arrives. I had sent Orders accordingly before the Receipt of your Notice of her Arrival.

I am ashamed of the Orders of my Countrymen for so much Tea, when necessaries are wanting for Cloathing and defending!

I have been long ill and unfit to write or think of writing, which occasioned my omitting to answer before your several Letters since the 16 of February. I omitted, also, answering a kind Letter from Mr. Ridley,[1] who, I suppose, is now gone. If not, present my respects to him and best Wishes of a prosperous Voyage and happy Sight of his Friends. I am getting better and hope our Correspondence will now be more regular.

I am ever your affectionate Uncle,

B. FRANKLIN.

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968. TO JOSHUA JOHNSON[2] (D. S. W.)

Passy, March 17, 1779.

SIR, I received the Honor of yours of the 6th inst. I took the first Opportunity of speaking to M. D'Arlincourt,

[1] Matthew Ridley, Maryland agent in Europe. — ED.

[2] A merchant of Nantes and London; native of Maryland. He was the

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fils,[1] one of the Farmers-general in whose Department you reside, on the subject of your Furniture, who told me very politely, that, as it was a Matter in which I interested myself, he would order the Duties, if they had been received, to be returned. By our Treaty we are only entitled to such Advantage respecting Duties as is enjoyed by the most favor'd Nations. I have not yet been able to obtain a certain Knowledge of the Duties paid by other Nations in France, and I am told it is not easy to obtain, as they are very different in the different Provinces, and there is not, as in England a printed Book of them. So, not being enough informed at Present to claim your Exemption as a Right, I was obliged to accept it as a Favor. But these Sorts of Favors I shall find a Difficulty in asking hereafter, for, the States being under great Obligations to the Farmers-general, who lent us Money in our Distress, and having often Occasion to ask Aids from this Government, one can hardly, with any Grace, demand at the same Time in Favour of Particulars an Exemption from paying their Share of the Duties whence only the Ability of affording such Aids can arise.

I have ordered the *Alliance* to be got ready as soon as possible. The Execution depends on Mr. Schweighauser and the Captain. I thank you for your Information relating to the *Bergère*. Orders had before been given relating to her Cargo.

first consul of the United States at London, 1785–1799. His daughter Louisa Catherine became the wife of John Quincy Adams. — Ed.

[1] He came of an ancient and distinguished family, and was guillotined during the Terror. He was the father of the poet, Ch. Victor Prévot, Vicomte D'Arlincourt. — Ed.

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With great Esteem, I have the Honour to be, sir, your most obedient and most humble Servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. — If you can by any Means obtain an Acc[t] of the Duties to be paid by different Nations in your Port, I shall be obliged to you for it, and will pay any Expence necessary for Copying, etc.

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969. TO M. MONTAUDOUIN (D. S. W.)

Passy, March 17, 1779.

DEAR SIR: —

I received your Favour of the 4th inst. by M. David[1] with much Pleasure; as it informed me of the welfare of Friends I love, and who are indeed beloved by everyBody. I thank you for your kind Congratulations,[2] and for the Prayer[3] you use in my Behalf. Tho' the Form is heathen, there is good Christian Spirit in it, and I feel myself very well disposed to be content with this World, which I have found hitherto a tolerable good one, & to wait for Heaven (which will not be the worse for keeping) as long as God pleases. In short I should have no Objection to living with you & M[me] Montaudoin in France another Century. I don't complain much, even of the Gout, which has harassed me ever since the Arrival of the Commission you so politely mention: There seems, however, some Incongruity in a *Plenipotentiary* who can neither stand nor go.

[1] David de Morlaix, a Farmer General. — ED.

[2] Upon his appointment as Plenipotentiary. — ED.

[3] Montaudouin had written "Je recite pour vous tres devotement la priere d'Horace pour Auguste: 'Serus in caelum redeas, diuque Laetus intersis [populo Quirini].'" — ED.

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With the Sincerest Esteem, Respect & Affection, I am, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

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970. TO WILLIAM McCREERY[1] (P. H. S.)

Passy Mar. 18, 1779

SIR,

I received your favours of Feb. 27 and March 6. Continued Illness, with want of Information on the Subject, have occasioned the Delay in answering them.

I have endeavour'd to learn what the Duties are that are payable by *the most favour'd Nations* on the Exportation of Salt from France: I am at length told that the Duties are very low; that they consist chiefly in what is paid for the Forms or Papers necessary in transacting Business regularly; and that they are equal in all Foreign Nations, and paid equally by all. If so we also must pay them. But you seem to think we have a Right to load Salt at Bordeaux *free of Duty:* Perhaps you have heard that there is some favour'd Nation which is allow'd that Right. Be so good as to enquire and obtain a certainty of this, and an Account what the Duties are, and of the different Duties paid by different Nations, if there is any difference. When I am well acquainted with the Facts, I shall know whether I can by any Application to the Ministry be of Service to you, and I shall exert myself with a great deal of Pleasure in ascertaining your Rights: But if our Shipping of Salt free of Duties be not a Right, and must be asked as a favour for particular Persons, which I apprehend you mean with

[1] A merchant of Bordeaux. W. T. F. secured passage for him to America June 4, 1781. — ED.

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regard to the Lading of the Buckskin, I find a Difficulty in doing this: For as we are obliged to be frequently requesting Aids of Money from the Government for our *Public Uses*, one cannot at the same time with any good Grace, desire, for *private Persons*, an Exemption in the Payment from those general Duties from whence only the Ability of granting such Aids must arise. I thank you for the offer of conveying Dispatches in that Vessel, which I may possibly make Use of.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient

humble Servant

B. FRANKLIN

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971. TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS (D. S. W.)

Passy, March 18, 1779

DEAR SIR: — I received duly yours of the 3 inst. My Indisposition seems to be wearing off, and I hope will permit me to go abroad in a few Days.

M. Neufville's[1] first Propositions were so much out of the Way that I could not accept them. He required a fifth Part of the Loan to be sent over to him annually during the first 5 years in the Produce of America for Sale, & the Money to remain in his Hands as a Fund for paying off the Debt in the last 5 years. By this Means he would have had the Use of our Money while we were paying Interest for it. He dropt this Demand on my objecting to it, and undertook to procure a Subscription on reasonable Terms. I wish him

[1] Jean de Neufville & Sons, merchants of Amsterdam. — ED.

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success; but as the English give at Present higher Interest than I am permitted to offer, I have little Dependance on that Subscription. Let me know what you hear of it from time to time.

Mr. Adams is gone to Nantes to take his Passage for America in one of our Frigates. Mr. A. Lee has retired from Chaillot to Paris; And his Brother is come on a Visit from Frankfort. He talks of a Congress to be held in Germany, & seems to want me to advise his Attendance there incogn. I know nothing of it, or of any Use he can be of there, & therefore, can give no Advice about it. He talks of 20,000 Men at Liberty by the German Peace to be hired by the English against us, and would be employed in preventing it — What do you think or learn of these Circumstances?

The present Situation of Affairs in your Country is interesting. Unacquainted as I am with your Parties & Interests, I find it difficult to perceive how they will terminate.

I am, Dear Sir, etc.

[B. F.]

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972. TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS (D. S. W.)

Passy, March 19, 1779.

DEAR NEPHEW: — In your receipts for M. Monthieu's[1] Copper there is mention made of *Copper Ore*. Explain this to me. For as we bought no Copper Ore of him, and as it is not so valuable a; Copper, it ought not to be given us instead of Copper.

[1] John Joseph Monthieu, a Paris merchant. — ED.

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Mr. Lee has yet sent me no Answer to mine relating to your Accounts. Let me know whether the Reference is accepted by the Referees, and whether it goes on. I send you three Original Papers that may be of use to you, as they shew Mr. Lee's great Skill in Accounts, and Ability in objecting them. The *first* is a Proposition M. Monthieu made *to obtain* a Contract. The *second* is the Contract actually made differing from the Proposition. The *third* is Mr. Lee's *Report*, wherein he took M. Monthieu's Proposition of a Contract to be an Account of *Charge* for the Execution of it; and comparing it with the Contract, he charges all the Differences he finds as so many Errors in M. Monthieu's Account. For Instance, M. Monthieu *proposed* to make 10,000 Suits; we agreed with him only for 6,000. Here Mr. Lee finds an *overcharge* of 4,000 Suits. M. Monthieu proposed that we should give him 38 Livres per Suit; we agreed for 37. Here Mr. Lee finds an Over-charge of 10,000 Livres, and so of the Rest; when in fact M. Monthieu, in his real Account, had charged exactly according to the Agreement. You must take good Care of these Papers, say nothing how you came by them, and return them to me safely.

I send you enclosed the Proposals of a Tin-Plate Manufacturer, which may some time or other be of use to you.

I shall dispose of your Letter to Mr. Lee as you desire. I would advise your avoiding the Publication you mention.

Explain to me what is meant in your Postcript by the *Zeal of the best of them*, etc.

I send an Order this Day to suspend the Action against M. Peltier.[1] But surely he acted very irregularly to sell a

[1] Peltier du Doyer, a merchant of Nantes. — Ed.

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Cargo consign'd to us, without our Order, and give the Produce to another. We ourselves never had any Dealings with M. Beaumarchais, and he has never produced any Account to us, but says the States owe him a great deal of Money. Upon his Word only we gave him up the Cargo of the *Amphitrite;* he promised then to give us an Account, but has never done it; and now, by means of M. Peltier, he has seized another Cargo. I imagine there is now no doubt but M. Peltier would be obliged to pay us the Money if the Action were continued. And Methinks every Man who makes a Demand ought to deliver an Account. For my own part, I imagine our Country has been really much obliged to M. Beaumarchais; and it is probable that Mr. Deane concerted with him several large Operations for which he is not yet paid. They were before my Arrival, and therefore I was not privy to them. Had I been alone when the Action was commenced, perhaps I should have thought of some milder Proceeding, making Allowance for M. B's not being bred a Merchant. But I think you cannot well justify M. Peltier.

I am ever your affectionate uncle.

B. FRANKLIN.

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973. TO DANIEL-MARC-ANTOINE CHARDON[1]

(D. S. W.)

Passy, ce 19. Mars 1779.

MONSIEUR,

J'ai lu avec Admiration votre requisitoire sur le Procès du Capitaine M^c^Neil. Heureux sont les Rois qui ont des Magistrats aussi sçavants et aussi habiles que vous, Monsieur,

[1] M. Chardon (1730–1795) was appointed *maitre des requêtes* (1764) and *procureur général près du conseil des prises.* — ED.

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pour éclairer leur justice. J'en sens tout le Bonheur pour la Nation Américaine que j'ai l'honneur de représenter en cette Cour: elle sçaura Monsieur qu'elle y est traittée en Frère, et que vous l'y deffendez en Ami. Agréez l'honneur de ma Reconnaissance et les Sentiments distingués avec les quels j'ai L'honneur d'etre

Monsieur,

Votre très humble et très obéissant
Serviteur B. F.

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974. TO MADAM CONWAY[1] (D. S. W.)

Passy March 25, 1779

I FIND, ma chere fille, that you and I have been very unlucky in our Endeavours to oblige M^r^ Mullens: for on the Contrary we have grievously offended him. I understood he had been taken Prisoner and stript by the English, and had not wherewith to pay the Expence of his Journey to his Regiment. I sent him an Order on my Banker for ten Guineas. He returns me the Order, and to make it & me & the Congress look ridiculous, he tells me I sent it him as a "Gratification" for his Services "in the Name of the Hon^ble^ Congress." I had no such Idea. I had declared that I had no Authority to make Gratifications to Officers, nor any Money put into my Hands for such Purposes; and he could not but see that the real Intention of the Order was expressed

[1] Wife of Thomas, Count de Conway, a soldier of Irish birth, and who had served in the French army. On the recommendation of Silas Deane he offered his services to Congress. He was made a brigadier-general, May 13, 1777. He led the "Conway cabal," to deprive Washington of military command. — ED.

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in the face of it; whereby his Claim, if he has any, to a Gratification, is left open. If his Intention was to obtain it from me, he was mistaken in the Application: He shou'd have apply'd to the Congress. They might know him & his Services. But I was totally unacquainted with both. I had only heard, as you may remember I told you that he spoke his Sentiments very freely in Paris against the Congress and America, which however did not prevent my offering him the little Aid I thought he stood in need of. I am glad he has no Occasion for it.

I join heartily in your Joy on the Return of your Husband; as I was a Witness to your perpetual Anxiety for his Welfare during his Absence. I wish your Happiness together may not again be interrupted, but continue during your Lives, — being ever

Your affectionate Father
(as you do me the Honor to call me)
[B. F.]

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975. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S. W.)

Passy, March 21, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I received duly yours of the 2d Inst. I am sorry you have had so much Trouble in the Affair of the Prisoners. You have been deceived as well as we. No Cartel Ship has yet appear'd. And it is now evident that the Delays have been of Design, to give more Opportunity of seducing the Men by Promises and Hardships to seek their Liberty in engaging against their Country: For we learn from those who have escaped, that there are Persons continually

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employed in cajoling and menacing them, representing to them that we neglect them, that your Government is willing to exchange them; and that it is our Fault it is not done: That all the News from America is bad on their side; we shall be conquer'd and they will be hang'd, if they do not accept the gracious offer of being Pardon'd, on Condition of serving the King, &c. A great part of your Prisoners have been kept these Six Months on board a Ship in Brest road, ready to be delivered; where I am afraid they were not so comfortably accommodated, as they might have been in the French Prisons. They are now ordered on shore. Dr. Bancroft has received your Letter here. He did not go to Calais.[1]

Knowing how earnestly and constantly you wish for Peace, I cannot end a Letter to you without dropping a Word on that Subject, to mark that my Wishes are still in Unison with yours. After the Barbarities your Nation has exercis'd against us, I am almost ashamed to own, that I feel sometimes for her Misfortunes and her Insanities. Your Veins are open, and your best Blood continually running. You have now got a little Army into Georgia, and are triumphing in that Success. Do you expect ever to see that Army again? I know not what Gen[l] Lincoln or Gen[l] Thomson may be able to effect against them, but, if they stay thro' the Summer in that Climate, there is a certain Gen[l] *Fever*, that I apprehend will give a good Acc[t] of most of them. Perhaps you comfort yourselves that our Loss of

[1] It had been intended, that Dr. Bancroft should proceed to England, with a power from Dr. Franklin to negotiate an exchange of prisoners; but some difficulty having arisen, of which Mr. Hartley's letter contained an intimation, that journey did not take place. — W. T. F.

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Blood is as great as yours. But, as Physicians say, there is a great Difference in the Facility of repairing that Loss between an old Body and a Young one. America adds to her Numbers annually 150,000 Souls. She, therefore grows faster than you can diminish her and will outgrow all the Mischief you can do her. Have you the same Prospects? But it is unnecessary for me to represent to you, or you to me, the Mischiefs each Nation is subjected to by this War; we all see clear enough the Nonsense of continuing it; the Difficulty is where to find Sense enough to put an End to it. Adieu, my Dear Friend, and believe me ever Yours most affectionately

B. FRANKLIN.

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976. TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE (A. P. S.) (L. C.)

Passy, March 22, 1779.

DEAR SIR: — I admire much the activity of your Genius and the strong Desire you have of being continually employ'd against our Common Enemy.

It is certain that the Coasts of England and Scotland are extreamly open and Defenceless; there are also many rich Towns near the Sea, which 4 or 5,000 Men, landing unexpectedly, might easily surprize and destroy, or exact from them a heavy Contribution, taking a part in ready Money and Hostages for the rest. I should suppose, for Example, that two Millions Sterling, or 48 Millions of Livres might be demanded of Bristol for the Town and Shipping; Twelve Million of Livres from Bath; Forty-eight Millions from Liverpool; Six Millions from Lancaster; and twelve

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Millions from Whitehaven. On the East Side there are the Towns of New-Castle, Scarborough, Lynn, and Yarmouth, from which very considerable sums might be exacted. And if among the Troops there were a few Horsemen to make sudden incursions at some little Distance from the Coast, it would spread Terror to much greater Distances, and the whole would occasion Movements and Marches of Troops that must put the Enemy to a prodigious Expence and harass them exceedingly. Their Militia will probably soon be drawn from the different Counties to one or two Places of Encampment, so that little or no Opposition can be made to such a Force as this above mentioned in the Places where they may land. But the Practicability of such an Operation, and the Means of facilitating and executing it, military People can best judge of. I have not enough of Knowledge in such Matters to presume upon Advising it, and I am so troublesome to the Ministers on other Accounts, that I could hardly venture to sollicit it if I were ever so confident of its Success. Much will depend on a prudent and brave Sea Commander, who knows the Coasts, and on a Leader of the Troops who has the affair at Heart, who is naturally active and quick in his Enterprizes, of a Disposition proper to conciliate the Good-will and Affection of both the Corps, and by that Means to prevent or obviate such Misunderstandings as are apt to arise between them, and which are often pernicious to joint Expeditions.

On the whole it may be encouraging to reflect on the many Instances of History which prove that in War, Attempts thought to be impossible, do often, for that very Reason become possible and practicable because nobody expects them and no Precautions are taken to guard against them.

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And those are the kind of Undertakings of which the Success affords the most glory to the Ministers who plan and to the Officers who execute them.

With the sincerest Esteem and affection, I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. F[RANKLIN].

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977. TO ARTHUR LEE (D. S. W.)

Passy, March 27, 1779

SIR, I have not hitherto undertaken to justify Mr. Williams' Accounts, nor to Censure your Conduct in not passing them. To prevent any suspicion of Partiality towards him as my Nephew, I avoided having anything to do with the examination of them; but left it entirely to you and Mr. Adams. After that Examination Mr. Adams drew up and sent me in for signing the order you mention: I considered the Expressions in it as only serving to show that the Accounts were not finally settled; and I considered Mr. Adams' drawing up and Sending me the Order as a Proof that, in his Judgment, who had with you examined the accounts, the Bills drawn on M. Grand ought to be paid. I therefore sign'd it. I was not, as you suppose, "*convinc'd that the accounts as they stood could not be pass'd;*" for, having never examined them, I could form no such Opinion of them. It was not till lately that, being press'd by M. Monthieu for a Settlement of his Accounts and finding that they had a reference to Mr. Williams, I got those from Mr. Adams. They were put up in a paper Case which cover'd the note you had made upon them, and that Case was fastened with Wax. This prevented the Notes being

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before seen either by MySelf or Mr. Adams, among whose Papers you had left those Accounts. He was as much surprized at seeing it as I was, and as much dissatisfied with another you had made in the body of the Accounts, which taken with the first, imports that, notwithstanding it appeared from Mr. Williams's own Acc that he has now and has long had in his hands upwards of an hundred thousand livres belonging to the Public, that have not been applyed to the public Use, "B. Franklin and John Adams, Esqrs., had given an Order on the Public Banquer for the payment of all Mr. Williams' Demands."

This being a severe Reflection upon us both, might be suspected, if I were disposed to be suspicious, as one Reason why it was shown to neither of us, but left conceal'd among the Papers to appear hereafter as a charge, not controverted at the Time, whereby a future accusation might be confirmed. Mr. Adams spoke in strong Terms of your having no right to enter Notes upon Papers without our Consent or Knowledge, and talk'd of making a counter Entry, in which he would have shown that your assertion of our having "given an Order for the Payment of all Mr. Williams' Demands" was not conformable to truth nor to the express Terms of the Order, but his attention being taken up with what related to his departure, was probably the cause of his omitting to make that Entry. On the whole, I judg'd it now encumbent on me, for my own sake and Mr. Adams', as well as for the Public Interest, to have those accounts fully examined, as soon as possible, by skilful and impartial persons, of which I inform'd you in mine of the 13th Instant, requesting you to aid the Enquiry by stating your Objections, that they might be considered by those judges, which I am sorry you

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do not think fit to comply with. I have no desire to screen Mr. Williams on acc[t] of his being my Nephew; if he is guilty of what you charge him with, I care not how soon he is deservedly punish'd and the family purg'd of him; for I take it that a Rogue living in [a] Family is a greater Disgrace to it than one *hang'd out* of it. If he is innocent, Justice requires that his Character should be speedily clear'd from the heavy Charge with which it has been loaded.

I have the honour to be, etc.

B. FRANKLIN.

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978. TO ARTHUR LEE (D. S. W.)

Passy, March 27, 1779

SIR: — The offer you make of sending me Copies, sealed and authenticated, of all the Papers in your Hands is very satisfactory; and as you say they are but few I suppose it may soon be done.[1] I imagined, when I desired you to send me the Originals, that they were a great many, and at present of no Importance to you, and therefore not worth copying. I assure you I had not the least intention of depriving you of anything you might think necessary for your Vindication. The suspicion is groundless and injurious. In a former Letter I offer'd you authenticated Copies of any remaining in my hands that you should judge might be of such Use to you; and I now offer you the originals if you had rather have them, and will content myself with keeping Copies.

[1] Franklin wrote to A. Lee, February 18, 1779, "Sir, I beg you will be pleased to send me by the bearer all the public papers in your hands belonging to this department." — ED.

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Mr. Adams did not as you insinuate exact any Promise of me to arrange and keep in order the Papers he sent me. He knew such a Promise unnecessary, for that I had always kept in order and by themselves the public Papers that were in my hands, without having them so confounded among a multitude of other Papers "that they could not be found when called for."

I have the honour to be with great respect, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

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979. TO STEPHEN SAYRE [1] (D. S. W.)

Passy, March 31, 1779.

SIR, I have just received your Favour of the 10th inst. from Copenhagen. The Account you give of the Disposition of the Swedish Court is very agreeable. I saw in the News-Papers that a Deputy of Congress was at Stockholm; did you obtain the Audiences you mention by assuming that Character? The Informations you did not chuse to venture by the Post from Copenhagen may be safely sent from Amsterdam.

I am not, as you have heard, the sole Representative of America in Europe. The commission of Mr. A. Lee, Mr. Wm. Lee, and Mr. Izard, to different Courts still subsist. I am only sole with Regard to France. Nor have I Power to give you any Employ worth your Accepting.

[1] Stephen Sayre was born on Long Island, N. Y., in 1734. Episodes of his adventurous career frequently appear in the correspondence of Franklin. He became a successful merchant and banker in London. He was chosen sheriff in 1774. Upon a charge of high treason he was committed to the Tower. He visited Berlin and Amsterdam, and at every opportunity eagerly solicited some salaried appointment at the hands of Franklin. — ED.

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Much has been said by the English about Divisions in America. No Division of any Consequence has arisen there. Petty Disputes between particular Persons about private Interests there are always in every Country: But with Regard to the great Point of Independence there is no Difference of Sentiment in the Congress, and as the Congress are the annual Choice of the People, it is easy to judge of their Sentiments by those of their Representatives.

The taking of Savannah makes a Noise in England and helps to keep up their Spirits: But I apprehend, before the Summer is over, they will find the Possession of that Capital of Georgia of as little Consequence as their former Possessions of Boston & Philadelphia; and that the Distempers of that unwholesome Part of the Country will very much weaken, if not ruin, that Army.

The principal Difficulty at Present in America consists in the Depreciation of their Currency, owing to the overquantities issued and the diminished demand for it in Commerce. But as the Congress has taken Measures for sinking it, expeditiously, and the several Governments are taxing vigorously for that Purpose, there is a Prospect of its recovering a proper Value. In the meantime, though an evil to particulars, there is some Advantage to the Publick in the Depreciation, as large nominal Values are more easily paid in Taxes, & the debt by that Means more easily extinguished.

I have the Honour to be, B. FRANKLIN

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980. TO WILLIAM LEE (D. S. W.)

Passy, April 2, 1779.

Sir, Before I apply for the Arms you desire, I wish to be informed whether your Brother did not apply for them at the same time he apply'd for the Cannon he obtained, or since, in Consequence of the Letter you mention to have sent us in January last, and whether they were refused or promised.

Since I had the Honour of seeing you I have received an Application from the Government of Maryland for a similar quantity of Arms and military Stores, which I am requested to obtain in the same Manner, and these with the Orders of Congress, will make so vast a quantity, that I apprehend greater difficulties in obtaining them. I should be glad, therefore, if a Part could be obtained elsewhere, that the quantity now to be apply'd for might be diminished. On this Occasion permit me to mention that the D'Acostas have presented a Memorial to me setting forth that they have provided Arms, etc., to a great Amount, in Consequence of a Contract made with you through your Brother, and that for no other Reason but because they were not furnished at the time agreed, there having been a Delay of a Month, which they say was not their Fault, but inevitable, he had refused to take them. Upon this they desire that I wou'd procure Justice to be done them, or that I would approve of their sending the Goods and endeavour to have the Contract comply'd with on the Part of Virginia.[1]

[1] The acrid correspondence of D'Acosta Brothers with Arthur Lee, dated December 12, 1778, is in A. P. S. (Franklin Papers, Vol. XII, No. 185). — Ed.

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I declined having any thing to do with the Affair, but I wish you to consider whether it would not be prudent to accommodate this little difference with those People, and take the Advantage of sending those Arms, which have been prov'd good, and I suppose still lie at Nantes ready to be shipt immediately, rather than wait the success of a doubtful Application.

I have the Honour to be, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

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981. TO JOHN ADAMS (M. H. S.)

Passy, April 3, 1779

SIR, I received the Letter you did me the Honour to write me of the 24th past. I am glad you have been at Brest, as your Presence there has contributed to expedite the Operations of Capt. Landais in refitting his Ship. I think with you that more has been made of the Conspiracy than was necessary; but that it would have been well if some of the most guilty could have received a proper Punishment. As that was impracticable under our present naval Code, I hope you will, on your Return, obtain an Amendment of it. I approve of cloathing the Midshipmen & petty Officers agreable to their Request to you, and hope you have ordered it, without waiting to hear from me; and I now desire that whatever else you may judge for the Good of the Service, our Funds & Circumstances considered, you would in my behalf give directions for, as the great Distance makes it inconvenient to send to me on every Occasion; and I can confide in your Prudence that you will allow no Expence that is unnecessary.

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My Gout continues to disable me from Walking longer than formerly: But on Tuesday the 23d past I thought myself able to go thro' the Ceremony, and accordingly went to Court, had my Audience of he King in the new Character, presented my Letter of Credence, and was received very graciously. After which I went the Rounds with the other Foreign Ministers, in visiting all the royal family. The Fatigue, however, was a little too much for my Feet, and disabled me for near another Week. Upon the whole I can assure you that I do not think the Good-Will of this Court to the good Cause of America is at all diminished by the late little Reverses in the fortune of War; & I hope Spain, who has now forty-nine Ships of the Line and 31 Frigates ready for Service, will soon by declaring, turn the Scale. Remember me affectionately to Master Johnny,[1] and believe me, with great Esteem, Sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant

B. FRANKLIN.

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982. TO ARTHUR LEE[2] (P. C.)

Paſsy, April 3. 1779.

SIR

As I had no Knowledge of the Gentleman, & he said he had lived in Virginia, I referr'd him to you, imagining you might know something of his Character, and whether it would be proper to give him the Paſs he deſires. If upon conversing with him you apprehend it may be safely done,

[1] John Quincy Adams. — ED.

[2] From the original in the possession of Mr. William F. Havemeyer. — ED.

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I would do it on your Recommendation: But as the uſe of it is to be in America and not here, I imagine it would be as well for you to give it as me.—I have the honour to be with great Respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient
& most humble Servant.

B. FRANKLIN.

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983. TO JOSHUA JOHNSON (D. S. W.)

Passy, April 8, 1779

SIR, Mr. Wm. Lee has lately been here from Frankfort: he has desired me to make such an Application in Behalf of the State of Virginia as you request in Behalf of Maryland. Mr. D'Acosta & Co. had complained to me that they had provided what Mr. Lee wanted, in Pursuance of a Contract made with Mr. A. Lee, who had refused to take the Goods off his Hands. I proposed to Mr. Wm. Lee to accommodate this little Difference, and take those Goods now lying ready at Nantes to be shipt, rather than wait the Event of an uncertain application to Government. He absolutely refuses, and says you may take them for Maryland, if you please. Pray let me know, as soon as may be, whether it will not suit you to agree for them with these Gentlemen.

I have the Honour to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

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984. TO JOHN ADAMS (M. H. S.)

Passy April 8. 1779

Sir,

I did myself the honour of writing to you a few Days since. Last night I received yours of the 31st past. I am glad to hear the ship is so far in order. As to the DisContents you find among the Officers and People, it is impossible for me at this Distance to judge of them, or of the means of removing them. I must therefore, as in my last, refer to your Judgment whatever you may think for the good of the service, considering our Circumstances and Funds, and I desire you would give orders accordingly. If the officers are dissatisfied with the Person who is here now, I fancy, but do not speak from knowledge, that he is not sollicitous about continuing in his Place; and would have no objection to being permitted to play as long as he pleases in Paris. I cannot at all interfere with regard to the disposition of the Exchanged Prisoners, by ordering them to go on board one Ship or another. They are Free men as soon as they land in France, and may inlist with which Captain they please.

I shall by this Post give the orders you desire to Mr Schweighauser and Capt. Landais, relating to your Passage and Sea Stores; tho' I did not think them necessary.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obed and most humble Servant

B. Franklin.

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985. TO CAPTAIN PETER LANDAIS (M. H. S.)

Passy April 8, 1779

SIR

Understanding that you expect an explicit order from me, this is to require you to receive on Board your ship the Alliance, the Honourable John Adams Esq. with his son and servant, and give them a passage therein to America.

I have the honour to be,

Sir

Your most obedient
humble Servant
B. FRANKLIN.

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986. TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS (D. S. W.)

Passy, April 8, 1779

DEAR JONATHAN: — Too much Business, too much Interruption by friendly Visits, and a little remaining Indisposition, have occasioned the Delay in answering your late Letters.

You desire a Line "relative to the Complexion of Affairs." If you mean our Affair [*sic*] at this Court, they wear as good a Complexion as ever they did.

I do not know what to advise concerning M. Monthieu's Proposition. Follow your own Judgment. If you doubt, set down all the Reasons, pro and con, in opposite Columns on a Sheet of Paper, and when you have considered them two or three Days, perform an Operation similar to that in

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some questions of Algebra; observe what Reasons or Motives in each Column are equal in weight, one to one, one to two, two to three, or the like, and when you have struck out from both Sides all the Equalities, you will see in which column remains the Ballance. It is for want of having all the Motives for and against an important Action present in or before the mind at the same time, that People hesitate and change their Determinations backwards and forwards Day after Day, as different Sets of Reasons are recollected or forgot, and if they conclude and act upon the last set, it is perhaps not because those were the best, but because they happen to be present in the Mind, and the better absent. This kind of *Moral Algebra* I have often practised in important and dubious Concerns, and tho' it cannot be mathematically exact, I have found it extreamly useful. By the way, if you do not learn it, I apprehend you will never be married.

There is in one Acc^{t} of the Copper an Article — des mines de St. Bell, 63,400. I suppose it was the word *mines*, not *Rosette*, that was translated ore.

Let me know, if you can, what Answer the Gentleman receives from London, on his Enquiries concerning a supposed Letter.

I send you herewith the Paper you desire respecting the Settlement of your Accounts. I send, also, an attested Copy of Mr. Lee's Reasons for not passing them. In answer to my letter requesting him to furnish the Gentlemen who are to examine them with such further Objections as he may have against them, he writes me that "I must excuse him, now that it is no longer his indispensible Duty, from concerning himself with a Business which is in much

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abler hands. If *Congress*," he adds, "should call upon me for farther Reasons than those that I have already given, it will then be my Duty to act, and I will obey." I cannot conceive his Reason for not giving his farther Reasons, (if he has any,) on the present Occasion, when they would be so proper: But he refuses, and I cannot compel him.

I shall file the Letters and Papers you sent me with your Accounts. I have received back those you inclosed in yours of March 27, relating to M. Monthieu's Contract. I have received, also, Messrs. Horneca & Fizeaux's[1] Invoice, and will return it by next Post with the Order you desire.

I have no Objection to your mentioning the Fact relative to the Censure of M. Monthieu's Acc^ts^.

I am ever your affectionate Uncle,

B. FRANKLIN.

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987. TO JOSEPH WHARTON, MATTHEW RIDLEY, JOSHUA JOHNSON, MATTHEW MEASE, JOHN ROSS, JON. NESBIT, —— CUMMINGS, JOSEPH GRIDLEY, AND J. D. SCHWEIGHAUSER, AMERICAN MERCHANTS, NOW AT NANTES

(D. S. W.)

Passy, April 8, 1779.

GENTLEMEN: — Great Objections having been made by the Hon^ble^ Mr. A. Lee to the Acc^ts^ of Mr. Jonathan Williams, late Agent for the Commissioners at Nantes, which are therefore yet unsettled; and, as not being conversant in mercantile Business, I cannot well judge of them, and therefore, as

[1] Amsterdam bankers. — ED.

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well as for other Reasons, I did not & cannot undertake to examine them myself, and they may be better examined at Nantes where the Business was transacted than either here or in America, I beg the favour of you, Gentlemen, that you would, for the sake of Justice and of the public Good, take that Trouble upon you and make Report to me thereupon; which I do hearby agree shall be conclusive and final (subject only to the Revision of Congress), in case Mr. Williams shall previously sign an Engagement to abide thereby; and hoping you will comply with my Request, I have ordered him to lay his Acc^ts^ fully before you.[1] If it should not suit you all to attend to this Business, I shall be content with the Judgment of as many of you as can & will attend it, the Number not being less than three. If an equal Number undertake it & should be divided in their Opinions I request them to join in chusing an Umpire, that the Matter may be concluded. I did desire M^r^ Lee, if he had any further Objections to furnish you with them; but he has in a Letter to me declined it. I have requested the Honourable Mr. A. Lee, who makes the objections, to furnish you with the same, that, by having the whole in view, you may be able to form an equitable judgment.

I have the honour to be with great respect, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

[1] "The above underlined, was put, in the Letter sent, as a Postscript." — F.

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988. PASSPORT FOR A MORAVIAN VESSEL

(L. C.)

To all Captains and Commanders of Armed Vessels of War, Privateers, and Letters of Marque belonging to the United States of America.

Gentlemen

The religious Society commonly called the Moravian Brethren, having established a Mission on the Coast of Labrador, for the conversion of the Savages there to the Christian Religion, which has already had very good Effects in turning them from their ancient Practices of surprising, plundering, and murdering such white People, Americans and Europeans, as, for the Purposes of Trade or Fishery, happened to come on that Coast; and persuading them to lead a Life of honest Industry, and to treat Strangers with Humanity and Kindness; and it being necessary for the Support of this Useful Mission, that a small Vessel should go thither every Year to furnish Supplies and Necessaries for the Missionaries and their Converts; which Vessel for the present Year is a
of about seventy-five Tons, called the
whereof is master Captain

This is to request you, that, if the said vessel should happen to fall into your Hands, you would not suffer her to be plundered, or hindered in her Voyage, but on the contrary afford her any Assistance she may stand in need of; wherein I am confident your Conduct will be approved by the Congress and your Owners.

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Given at Passy, near Paris, this 11th day of April

B. FRANKLIN,

Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America at the Court of France.

P. S. The same request is respectfully made to the commanders of armed Vessels belonging to France and Spain, friends of the said United States.

B. FRANKLIN.

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989. FROM JEAN-PAUL MARAT TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN[1] (A. P. S.)

April 12th, '79.

SIR

The report of the Committee for to morrow has been declined by M. le Roy, & is delay'd till Saturday next.

I again beg earnestly you would be so good as to be present then to give your opinion, which will be requested by M. le Comte de Maillebois.

Was it not so material a point to the Author, that a candid judgment should be pass'd upon his work, he would trust to time alone. But he is certain that many a Accademical gentleman do not look with pleasure upon his discoveries, & will do their utmost to prejudice the whole Body. Let the cabal be ever so warm, it certainly will be Silenced by the Sanction of such a Man as Doctor Franklin: and how far a judgement passed by himself and the Royal Academy can influence public opinion is well known.

If I appeare troublesome, Sir; my consciousness of your Benevolence & my respect for your candour and understanding are my apology.

THE REPRESENTATIVE.

[1] Marat had conducted laborious experiments to determine the nature of fire. The results of his researches he sent to Franklin soliciting his judgment upon them. Franklin regarded them seriously, and championed the eager and zealous philosopher. At the meeting of the Academy (April 17, 1779) Marat's experiments were declared to be new, exact, and made in accordance with a new method which opened vast fields for the research of physicists. — ED.

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990. TO M. DE SARTINE (D. S. W.)

Passy, April 18, 1779.

SIR, By letters I am daily receiving I find there are in various prisons of France a number of American sailors who, having been forced into the English service and since taken, remain confined with those of that nation, but are very desirous of serving their own country in any of our ships of war; and to that end request I would obtain their discharge from their present confinement. To prevent giving your excellency the frequent trouble of particular application and orders upon every occasion, I beg leave to submit it to your consideration whether it would not be well to give a general order to those who have the care of the prisoners, to examine in each of them those who pretend to be Americans and who desire to enter our service; and such as are found to answer that description be sent immediately to L'Orient and ship with Captain Jones or in the *Alliance*.

I am with sincere respect, your excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

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991. TO JOHN ADAMS (M. H. S.)

Passy, April 21, 1779

SIR,

I have received your two Favours of the 13th inst. I am much obliged to you for undertaking the Trouble of contenting the Officers and People of the Alliance. I must now beg Leave to make a little Addition to that Trouble by

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requesting your Attention to the situation of the Officers and Sailors, late Prisoners in England, which Mr. Williams will acquaint you with, and that you would likewise order for them such Necessaries and Comforts as we can afford. I wish we were able to do all they want and desire; but the scantiness of our Funds and the Multitude of Demands prevent it.

The English Papers talk much of their Apprehensions about Spain; I hope they have some Foundation.

With great esteem, I have the honour to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

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992. TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS[1] (D. S. W.)

Passy, April 21, 1779

DEAR MASTER JOHNNY,

I am glad you have seen Brest and the fleet there. It must give you an Idea of the naval force of this Kingdom which you will long retain with Pleasure.

[1] John Quincy Adams, aged eleven, accompanied his father, as John Adams wrote to Franklin, "in the capacity of Interpreter, Secretary, Companion, and Domestick, to his Poppa." The following letter from him taking farewell of Franklin is in A. P. S.:—

Alliance April ye 22 1779

DEAR FRIEND

I just now arrived here from Nantes & once more find myself aboard Ship & hope soon to sail for America once more, this is about 38 miles from Nantes. Yesterday morning with the wind very high against us, and sail'd on the boat till 12 o'clock last night when we arrived at painboeuf which is about 30 miles from Nantes & this morning set out from there at about eight oclock and arrived here as I said before. Just now but as the boat is just agoing I cannot write anymore & so conclude myself your affectionate Friend

JOHN Q. ADAMS.

M Benj[a] Franklin
Passy near Paris.

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I caused the Letters you inclosed to me to be carefully delivered, but have not received Answers to be sent you.

Benjamin whom you so kindly remember, would have been glad to hear of your Welfare, but he is gone to Geneva. As he is destined to live in a Protestant Country, and a Republic, I thought it best to finish his Education where the proper Principles prevail.

I heartily wish you a good Voyage & happy sight of your Mama, being really your Affectionate Friend,

B. FRANKLIN.

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993. TO JOSIAH QUINCY (L. C.)

Passy, April 22, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I received your very kind Letter by Mr. Bradford, who appears a very sensible and amiable young Gentleman, to whom I should with Pleasure render any service here upon your much respected Recommendation; but I understand he returns immediately.

It is with great Sincerity I join you in acknowledging and admiring the Dispensations of Providence in our Favour. America has only to be thankful, and to persevere. God will finish his Work, and establish their Freedom; and the Lovers of Liberty will flock from all Parts of Europe with their Fortunes to participate with us of that Freedom, as soon as Peace is restored.

I am exceedingly pleas'd with your Account of the French Politeness and Civility, as it appeared among the Officers and People of their Fleet. They have certainly advanced in those Respects many degrees beyond the English. I

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find them here a most amiable Nation to live with. The Spaniards are by common Opinion suppos'd to be cruel, the English proud, the Scotch insolent, the Dutch Avaricious, &c., but I think the French have no national Vice ascrib'd to them. They have some Frivolities, but they are harmless. To dress their Heads so that a Hat cannot be put on them, and then wear their Hats under their Arms, and to fill their Noses with Tobacco, may be called Follies, perhaps, but they are not Vices. They are only the effects of the tyranny of Custom. In short, there is nothing wanting in the Character of a Frenchman, that belongs to that of an agreable and worthy Man. There are only some Trifles surplus, or which might be spared.

Will you permit me, while I do them this Justice, to hint a little Censure on our own Country People, which I do in Good will, wishing the Cause removed. You know the Necessity we are under of Supplies from Europe, and the Difficulty we have at present in making Returns. The Interest Bills would do a good deal towards purchasing Arms, Ammunition, Clothing, Sail-cloth, and other Necessaries for Defence. Upon Enquiry of those who present these Bills to me for Acceptance, what the Money is to be laid out in, I find that most of it is for Superfluities, and more than half of it for Tea. How unhappily in this Instance the Folly of our People, and the Avidity of our Merchants, concur to weaken and impoverish our Country. I formerly computed, that we consum'd before the War, in that single Article, the value of £500,000 Sterling annually. Much of this was sav'd by stopping the Use of it. I honoured the virtuous Resolution of our Women in foregoing that little Gratification, and I lament that such Virtue

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should be of so short Duration. Five Hundred Thousand Pounds Sterling, annually laid out in defending ourselves, or annoying our Enemies, would have great Effects. With what Face can we ask Aids and Subsidies from our Friends, while we are wasting our own Wealth in such Prodigality? With great and sincere Esteem, I have the honour to be, dear Sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

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994. FROM SAMUEL COOPER TO B. FRANKLIN

(A. P. S.)

Boston, 4th January, 1779.

MY DEAR SIR,

The Marquis de la Fayette will do me the Honour to be the Bearer of this Letter. This young Nobleman has done Honour to his Nation, as well as to himself, by the manner in which he has served these States. His Intrepidity and Alertness in the Field are highly distinguished. His Prudence and good Temper are equally remarkable. He is highly esteemed and beloved in Congress, in the army, and, thro' the States; and, tho' we are not without Parties, and his Situation has been sometimes very delicate, I have never heard that he has made a single enemy. He has gone thro' great Fatigues, he has faced uncommon Dangers, he has bled for our Country, and leaves it, as far as I am able to find, with universal applause. In short, his whole Conduct, both public and private, appears to me to have been most happily adapted to serve the great Purpose of the Alliance, and cement the two Nations. Justice obliges me to make this mention of one, who has done so much for our Country, as well as his own, and from whose acquaintance, with which he has honoured me, I have received the greatest Pleasure. His acquaintance with our military and political Affairs will enable him to give you many Details, which cannot easily be conveyed by Writing.

You will hear, before this reaches you, of what has been done in this Quarter by the Armament under the orders of the Count d'Estaing. The abilities of this commander, his Bravery, and Zeal for our common cause, are indisputably great. No man could have done more in his Situation, than he has done. He was unfortunate in the Weather he met with, which greatly delayed his Passage to these Seas, gave an opportunity to the British Navy and Army to escape from Philadelphia, snatch'd a Victory from him off Rhode Island, and put his Fleet in such a condition, that he was indispensably

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obliged to leave that Place at a critical Time, which occasioned reflections from some, that were unmerited. He bore all with a manly Patience and uncommon Prudence. I admired his Firmness, Silence, and Condescension. He relyed on the Proofs he had given of attachment to our Cause, and of the Capacity and undauntedness with which he had prosecuted the Service upon which he was sent.

The account he gave of the Reasons for coming to Boston with his Fleet, before the Council of this State, not only satisfied that Body, but gave them a high Idea of his Merits as a Commander. The Prejudices of a few soon vanished, which had been raised by an honest but indiscreet Warmth in some officers employed in the Expedition against Rhode Island. His officers imitated their commander in preserving the best order thro' the Fleet during their Residence here; everybody admired the peaceable, inoffensive, courteous Behaviour of such a number of men, and the Count left us on the 4th of November last, with the strongest Impressions of Esteem and Affection for him, of the Friendship of his Court and Nation for us, and of the superior order and civility prevailing in the French Forces. He is gone, it is conjectur'd (for no-Body pretends to know), for the West Indies. We hope, if the War continues, to see him in the Spring, and that Canada will be wrested from the British Power. This may easily be done by a joint Invasion by Sea and Land, provided our Finances will allow us to support an army; but the Depreciation of our Money is so great, that I fear our Inability to do this, unless we have assistance and can procure Loans from abroad. If such a Plan of Operation is adopted, France must give us the most unequivocal assurances, that she means not to resume the Government of Canada, but to incorporate it with the United States. This is her true Interest, and is so agreeable to the Principles and Basis of the alliance, that I have not the least doubt she intends it, and it will only be needful to make known her Intentions in the most explicit manner, at least to us.

It gives me great Pleasure to hear of the continuance of your Health and Vivacity. Though it is long since I have had the Pleasure of a Line from you, I am sure you do not forget one, who is, with the greatest Respect and the warmest Friendship, ever your's,

SAMUEL COOPER.

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995. TO SAMUEL COOPER (L. C.)

Passy, April 22, 1779.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received your valuable Letter by the Marquis de la Fayette, and another by Mr. Bradford. I can only write

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a few Words in answer to the latter, the former not being at hand. The Depreciation of our Money must, as you observe, greatly affect Salary Men, Widows, and Orphans.[1] Methinks this Evil deserves the attention of the several Legislatures, and ought, if possible, to be remedied by some equitable law, particularly adapted to their Circumstances. I took all the Pains I could in Congress to prevent the Depreciation, by proposing first, that the Bills should bear Interest; this was rejected, and they were struck as you see them. Secondly, after the first Emission, I proposed that we should stop, strike no more, but borrow on Interest those we had issued. This was not then approved of, and more Bills were issued. When, from the too great Quantity, they began to depreciate, we agreed to borrow on Interest; and I propos'd, that, in order to fix the Value of the Principal, the Interest should be promised in hard Dollars. This was objected to as impracticable; but I still continue of Opinion, that, by sending out Cargoes to purchase it, we might have brought in Money sufficient for that purpose, as we brought in powder, &c. &c.; and that, tho' this Operation might have been attended with disadvantage, the Loss would have been a less Mischief than any Measure attending the Discredit of the Bills, which threatens to take out of our Hands the great Instrument of our Defence.

The Congress did at last come into the Proposal of paying the Interest in real Money. But when the whole Mass of the Currency was *under Way* in Depreciation, the Momentum of its Descent was too great to be stopt by a Power, that might at first have been sufficient to prevent the Beginning of the Motion. The *only Remedy* now seems to be a

[1] Salt sold in April, 1779, for £7 10s. a bushel. — ED.

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Diminution of the Quantity by a vigourous Taxation, of great *nominal* Sums, which the People are more able to pay, in proportion to the Quantity and diminished Value; and the *only Consolation* under the Evil is, that the Publick Debt is proportionably diminish'd with the Depreciation; and this by a kind of imperceptible Tax, every one having paid a Part of it in the Fall of Value that took place between his receiving and Paying such Sums as pass'd thro' his hands. For it should always be remembered, that the original Intention was to sink the Bills by Taxes, which would as effectually extinguish the Debt as an actual Redemption.

This Effect of Paper Currency is not understood on this Side the Water. And indeed the whole is a Mystery even to the Politicians, how we have been able to continue a War four years without Money, and how we could pay with Paper, that had no previously fix'd Fund appropriated specifically to redeem it. This Currency, as we manage it, is a wonderful Machine. It performs its Office when we issue it; it pays and clothes Troops, and provides Victuals and Ammunition; and when we are obliged to issue a Quantity excessive, it pays itself off by Depreciation.

Our Affairs in general stand in a fair Light thro'out Europe. Our Cause is universally approved. Our Constitutions of Government have been translated and printed in most Languages, and are so much admired for the Spirit of Liberty that reigns in them, that it is generally agreed we shall have a vast accession of People of Property after the War, from every Part of this Continent, as well as from the British Islands. We have only to persevere to be great and happy. With the sincerest esteem, I am ever, Dear Friend Yours most affectionately

B. FRANKLIN.

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996. TO JOHN ADAMS (M. H. S.)

Passy, April 24, 1779

Sir, By the enclosed Letter from M. de Sartine expressing his Majesty's Desire that the *Alliance* should be retained here a little longer, you will see that I am under a kind of Necessity of disappointing you in your Intentions of making your Passage in that Vessel, which would be more unpleasing to me but for these Considerations, that possibly it may be safer for you to go in a Ship where the Crew, not being so mixed, can be better depended on, where you will not be so incommoded by the Misunderstandings subsisting between the Officers and their Capt. and where you will have the Society of the French Ambassador, M. le Chevalier de la Luzerne, who appears to me a most amiable Man, and of very sensible & pleasing Conversation. I hope this will in some Measure compensate for the Inconvenience of shifting your Stores from one Ship to the other. And as I shall order the *Alliance* to L'Orient, where the King's Frigate is that carries the Ambassador, the Removal of your Things from one Ship to the other will be more easy; you can even go thither in the *Alliance* if you chuse it. The Ships in the American Trade which were at Nantes when I offer'd them the Convoy of the *Alliance* having declined that offer and sailed, as I understand, under another and perhaps safer Convoy, makes her immediate Departure for America less necessary, and perhaps she may now make a Cruize in these Seas, for which I understand she will have time; and which will be probably more advantageous,

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and therefore more satisfactory, to her People than a direct Return. I hope she may procure us some more Prisoners to exchange the Rest of our Countrymen, and at the same time reimburse us the Charges of her Refitting, which you know we stand much in need of. M. Dumas writes me from the Hague of the 19th: "Je sçais depuis hier *de bonne part*, que l'Espagne s'est enfin declarée. Cela fera un bon effet ici & partout." I hope his Intelligence is good, but nothing of it has yet transpired here.

Enclosed I send you a Cover which I have just received from Martinique, directed to me, but containing only a Letter for you. The Cover being unskilfully seal'd over, the Seal of your Letter was so attached to it that I had like to have broke open the one in opening the other. I send you also another Letter which came from Spain.

I am obliged for your Offer of taking Charge of my Dispatches for America. I shall send them down to you by M. De la Luzerne, who is to set off in a few Days.

With great Esteem, I have the honour to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

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997. TO JOHN PAUL JONES (D. S. W.)

Passy, April 27, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I have at the Request of M. de Sartine, postponed the sending the *Alliance* to America and have ordered her to proceed immediately from Nantes to L'Orient, where she is to be furnished with her Complement of Men, join your little Squadron, and act under your Command.

The Marquis De la Fayette will be with you soon. It

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has been observed, that joint Expeditions of Land and Sea Forces often miscarry, thro' Jealousies and misunderstandings between the Officers of the different Corps. This must happen, where there are little Minds, actuated more by personal Views of Profit or Honour to themselves, than by the warm and sincere Desire of Good to their Country. Knowing you both as I do and your just manner of thinking on these Occasions, I am confident nothing of the kind can happen between you, and that it is unnecessary for me to recommend to either of you that Condescension, mutual Good Will & Harmony, which contribute so much to Success in such Undertakings.

I look upon this Expedition as an Introduction only to greater Trusts, and more extensive Commands, and as a kind of Trial of both your Abilities and of your Fitness in Temper & Disposition for acting in Concert with others. I flatter myself therefore that nothing will happen that may give Impressions to the Disadvantage of either of you, when greater Affairs shall come under Consideration. As this is understood to be an American Expedition, under the Congress' Commission and Colours, the Marquis, who is a Major-General in that Service, has of course the Step in Point of Rank, and he must have the Command of the Land Forces, which are committed by the King to his Care: But the Command of the Ships will be entirely in you; in which I am persuaded, that, whatever Authority his Rank might in strictness give him, he will not have the least Desire to interfere with you. There is Honour enough to be got for both of you, if the expedition is conducted with a prudent Unanimity. The Circumstance is indeed a little Unusual; for there is not only a Junction of Land and Sea

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Forces, but there is also a Junction of Frenchmen and American, which increases the Difficulty of maintaining a good Understanding. A cool, prudent Conduct in the Chiefs is, therefore, the more necessary; and I trust neither of you will in that respect be deficient. With my best Wishes for your Success, Health, and Honour, I remain, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

INSTRUCTIONS

To the honourable J. P. Jones Esquire, Commander of the American Squadron in the Service of the United States, now in the Port of L'Orient. (D. S. W.)

1. His Majesty, having been pleased to grant some Troops for a particular Expedition proposed to annoy our Common Enemy, in which the Sea-Force under your Command might have an Opportunity of distinguishing itself; you are to receive on board your Ships of War, and the other Vessels destin'd for that purpose, the Troops that shall present themselves to you, afford them such Accommodation as may be most proper for preserving their Health, and convey them to such Port or Place as their Commander shall desire to land them at.

2. When the Troops are landed you are to aid, by all means in your Power, their Operations, as they will be instructed in like manner to aid and support those you may make with your Ships, that so by this Concurrence and Union of your different forces, all that such a Compounded Strength is capable of may be effected.

3. You are during the Expedition never to depart from the Troops, so as not to be able to protect them or to secure

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their retreat in Case of a Repulse; and in all Events you are to endeavour their compleat Reimbarkation on board the Ships and transports under your Command, when the Expedition shall be ended.

4. You are to bring to France all the English Seamen you may happen to take Prisoners, in order to compleat the good work you have already made such Progress in, of delivering by an Exchange the rest of our Countrymen now languishing in the goals of Great Britain.

5. As many of your Officers and People have lately escaped from English Prisons, either in Europe or America, you are to be particularly attentive to their Conduct towards the Prisoners, which the fortune of War may throw into your hands; lest resentm[t] of the more than Barbarous Usage by the English in many Places towards the Americans should occasion a Retaliation, and an Imitation of what ought rather to be detested and avoided, for the Sake of Humanity and for the honour of our Country.

6. In the same view, altho' the English have wantonly burnt many defenceless Towns in America, you are not to follow this Example, unless where a Reasonable Ransom is refused; in which Case, your own generous feelings, as well as this Instruction, will induce you to give timely Notice of your Intention, that sick and ancient Persons, Women and Children, may be first removed.

Given at Passy, the 28th Day of April, 1779.

B. FRANKLIN,
Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States to the Court of France.[1]

[1] To this Jones replied in a memorable letter of May 1, 1779, beginning "Honoured and Dear Sir, the letter which I had the honour to receive from

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998. TO ARTHUR LEE (D. S. W.)

Passy, May 3, 1779.

SIR,

I did write to the Gentlemen at Nantes concern'd in fitting out the Vessels for America, offering them the *Alliance* as a Convoy, and order'd her to Nantes accordingly. They did not chuse to accept that offer knowing, as I suppose, her Weakness, but sail'd for Brest, to go with the French Convoy, without waiting her Arrival, and would probably have been gone long before she could have been fitted for Sea, if contrary Winds had not prevented. I wish your Information were true, that she is mann'd, and fit for such Service; it must be from some Person who is unacquainted with the facts, perhaps Mr. Ford.

I must suppose the Merchants are satisfied with the Convoy they have put their Ships under, as I do not learn that they have applied for one more suitable. I would readily have sollicited such an Application, if I had understood it to be necessary, being equally desirous with you of their arriving safe, and sensible of the Importance of it. But I have not received a line from any of them to any such purpose; and Captain Landais has assured me, that my supposition of his having Men sufficient to fight his Ship on occasion, in going home, tho' not enough to man Prizes on a Cruise, was a great Mistake in my informer; he then

your Excellency to-day, together with your liberal and noble minded instructions would make a coward brave. You have called up every sentiment of public virtue in my breast and it shall be my pride and ambition in the strict pursuit of your instructions to *deserve success*." — ED.

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wanted 150 men, & I have not since heard of his having recruited more than 40, with the exchanged Americans from England. Mr. Ford may probably be accommodated in the same Frigate that will take Mr. Adams. I have the honour to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

P.S. I am glad to hear from you, that Supplies necessary for Virginia are shipt.

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999. TO THOMAS VINY[1] (L. C.)

Passy, May 4. 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I received with great Pleasure your kind Letter, as I learnt by it that my hospitable Friend still exists, and that his Friendship for me is not abated.

We have had a hard Struggle, but the Almighty has favoured the just Cause; and I join most heartily with you in your Prayers, that he may perfect his Work, and establish Freedom in the new World, as an Asylum for those of the Old, who deserve it. I find that many worthy and wealthy families of this Continent are determined to remove thither and partake of it, as soon as Peace shall make the Passage safer; for which Peace I also join your Prayers most cordially, as I think the War a detestable one, and grieve much at the Mischief and Misery it occasions to many; my only Consolation being, that I did all in my power to prevent it.

When all the Bustle is over, if my short Remainder of

[1] A wheel manufacturer of Tenterden, Kent. — ED.

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Life will permit my Return thither, what a Pleasure will it be to me to see my old Friend and his Children settled there! I hope he will find Vines and Fig-trees there for all of them, under which we may sit and converse, enjoying Peace and Plenty, a good Government, good Laws, and Liberty, without which Men lose half their Value. I am with much Esteem, dear Friend, yours most affectionately

[B. FRANKLIN.]

1000. TO MRS. PATIENCE WRIGHT[1] (L. C.)

Passy, May 4, 1779.

DEAR MADAM,

I received your Favour of the 14th of March past, and, if you should continue in your Resolution of returning to

[1] Mrs. Patience Wright was altogether a very extraordinary woman. She was the niece of the celebrated John Wesley, but was born at Philadelphia, in which city her parents settled at an early period. Mrs. Wright was greatly distinguished as a modeller in wax; which art she turned to a remarkable account in the American war, by coming to England, and exhibiting her performances. This enabled her to procure much intelligence of importance, which she communicated to Dr. Franklin and others, with whom she corresponded during the whole war. As soon as a general was appointed, or a squadron begun to be fitted out, the old lady found means of access to some family where she could gain information, and thus, without being at all suspected, she contrived to transmit an account of the number of the troops, and the place of their destination to her political friends abroad. She at one time had frequent access to Buckingham House; and used, it was said, to speak her sentiments very freely to their Majesties, who were amused with her originality. The great Lord Chatham honoured her with his visits, and she took his likeness, which appears in Westminster Abbey. Mrs. Wright died very old in February, 1786. — W. T. F.

I know not by what authority Temple Franklin declares Patience Wright to be a niece of John Wesley. Nor was she born at Philadelphia. Her parents, named Lovell, were members of the Society of Friends, living at Bordentown, N.J. Her husband also resided in that town. She was forty-seven when she removed to England in 1772. — ED.

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America, thro' France, I shall certainly render you any of the little Services in my Power; but there are so many Difficulties at present in getting Passages from hence, particularly safe ones for Women, that methinks I should advise your Stay till more settled Times, and till a more frequent Intercourse is established.

As to the Exercise of your Art here, I am in doubt whether it would answer your Expectations. Here are two or three who profess it, and make a Show of their Works on the Boulevards; but it is not the Taste for Persons of Fashion to sit to these Artists for their Portraits; and both House Rent and Living at Paris are very expensive.

I thought that friendship required I should acquaint you with these Circumstances; after which you will use your Discretion. I am, Dear Madam

Your most obedient and most humble Servant

B. F[RANKLIN.]

P.S. My Grandson, whom you may remember when a little saucy Boy at School, being my Amanuensis in writing the within letter, has been diverting me with his Remarks. He conceives, that your Figures cannot be pack'd up without Damage from any thing you could fill the boxes with to keep them steady. He supposes, therefore, that you must put them into Post-chaises, two and two, which will make a long train upon the road, and be a very expensive Conveyance; but, as they will eat nothing at the Inns, you may the better afford it. When they come to Dover, he is sure they are so like Life and Nature, that the Master of the Pacquet will not receive them on board without Passes; which you will do well therefore to take out from the

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Secretary's Office, before you leave London; where they will cost you *only* the modest Price of Two Guineas and Sixpence each, which you will pay without Grumbling, because you are sure the Money will never be employ'd against your Country. It will require, he says, five or six of the long wicker French Stage Coaches to carry them as Passengers from Calais to Paris, and at least two large ships with good Accommodations to convey them to America; where all the World will wonder at your Clemency to Lord N——; that, having it in your Power to hang, or send him to the Lighters, you had generously repriev'd him for Transportation.

1001. TO JOHN LLOYD

Passy, May 4, 1779.

DEAR SIR, I received the letter you did me the honour to write me of the 10th past. As you seem to have some reliance on my advice in the affair you mention, I ought to give it candidly and sincerely. And it must, therefore, be, not to accept of the offer made you. If you carry your family to America, it is, I suppose, with the intention of spending the remainder of your days in your own country. This cannot be done happily without maintaining the general good opinion of your countrymen. Your entering by that door will unavoidedly subject you to suspicions; those suspicions will render your situation uncomfortable. I think, therefore, you had better conclude to stay where you are till peace, though under some present inconveniences. The circumstances of such a family will always justify this, wherever you shall

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arrive in America. Please to make my affectionate respects acceptable to your amiable lady, and believe me, with sincere esteem, dear sir, etc., etc.

B. FRANKLIN.

1002. FROM DAVID HARTLEY TO B. FRANKLIN (D. S. W.)

London, April 22, 1779.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The bearer of this, and of some other papers (Mr. D.) is a very sensible and worthy Gentleman, with whom I had the pleasure of contracting an acquaintance since the Commencement of the American troubles, originally upon the business of the American prisoners. It is a satisfaction to me at all times to have found him a friend to the restoration of Peace between the two Countries. It has likewise been an additional satisfaction and confirmation to me in my own thoughts upon that subject, to find that his sentiments have, I think upon most or all of the subjects upon w^ch^ we have conversed, coincided with mine. We both seemed possessed of the opinion, that some plan of opening a negotiation upon preliminaries, w^ch^ each side might find to be a sufficient security to itself, might be practicable; and then your sentiment, w^ch^ you gave me in a letter some years ago, might have its free scope and effect, viz. *A little time given for cooling might have excellent effects.*

The sentiments I have opened to you in my late letters for some months past, and w^ch^ I have reduced in an enclosed paper into a more specific shape, seem to me, upon very repeated reflection, to promise the fairest ground of good expectation. These propositions originate from myself, as a mediator; I have communications with both sides, but certainly no authority to make proposals from either; and perhaps neither side, if I were to make the propositions separately to each (being myself unauthorized), might give me positive consent. Each side separately might say *No*, from what is called political prudence; & yet each side might secretly wish that the offer be made, with a *Done first*, from the other party. I think the proposition of a truce for 5 or 7 years, leaving all things in the present dispute *in statu quo*, must be advantageous to all parties, if it were only in Consideration that a general satisfactory peace to all parties *may* come among the *excellent effects of time given for cooling*. We can but fight it out at last. War never comes too late; Wisdom may step in between. These Matters have stolen upon us, to great and formidable consequences from small and unsuspected beginnings; but Henceforward we sh'd know by experience what to expect. If the rage

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of war c^d^ but be abated for a sufficient length of time for reason and reflection to operate, I think it w^d^ never revive. I cannot pretend to forecast the result of any negotiation, but I think war w^d^ not revive; w^ch^ is all that I want for my argument. Peace is a *Bonum in se.* Whereas the most favorable events of War are but relatively lesser evils: But certainly they are evils. *Mala in se,* not *Bona in se.*

I hope that a cessation of hostilities w^d^ produce a renewal of affection: But even to take the argument at the worst advantage, the two parties are at a cooling distance of 3000 Miles asunder. If the flames of war c^d^ be but once extinguished, Does not the Atlantick Ocean contain cold water enough to prevent their bursting out again? I am very strongly of Opinion that the two nations of Great Britain & North America w^d^ accord to the proposition of a truce *for cooling.* I cannot say whether a British Ministry w^d^ accord to it, because they wont tell me; nor can I say whether an American plenipo:^y^ w^d^ accord to it, because, probably you will not tell me. I put myself into your hands however when I tell you frankly, that I am of opinion that both of you w^d^ accord to it, if there c^d^ be a *Done first* on either side, to bind the bargain fast. You [have] the odds of me upon this Declaration, because you know one half of the Question, whether I am right or wrong in my Opinion; and I cannot give you any proof on the other side, but only my own presumptive judgement upon a course of reasoning in my own thoughts and observations.

But for France. My judgement w^d^ be, that if the proposition of the proposed preliminaries sh^d^ be agreeable to America, France w^d^ do very unhandsomely to defeat it by their refusal. I likewise think the interest of France, because their interest leads them to go to a certain point, & no further. There is a disparity in the opperation of the terms of the alliance on the part of France, and on the part of America. The more vigorously France interposes, the better for America. In proportion to their exertions, they create less or more a diversion of the British force. This reasoning goes strait forward for America; but it is not so with France. There is a certain point to France, beyond w^ch^ their work would fail, and recoil upon themselves; if they were to drive the British Ministry totally to abandon the American war, it w^d^ become totally a French war. The Events of a twelve Month past seem to bear testimony to this Course of reasoning. The Disadvantage upon the bargain to America is, that the efficacy of the French Alliance to them — presupposes their continuance in the war. The demur to France is, that the liberation of their new ally recoils with double weight of the war upon themselves, without any ulterior points of advantage in view, as dependent upon that alliance. I think the interest of all parties coincides with the proposition of Preliminaries.

The proposed Preliminaries appear to me to be just and equitable to all Parties. But the great object with me is to come to some preliminaries. I could almost add, whatever those preliminaries might be provided a suspension

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of arms for an adequate term of Years were one, I think it w^d^ be ten thousand to one against any future renewal of the war. It is not necessary to enter at large into the reasons w^ch^ induce me to think, that the British ministry, as well as an American plenipotentiary, w^d^ consent to the terms of the proposed preliminaries for indeed I do not know that I am founded in that opinion with respect to either, but still I believe it of both.

But what can a private person do in such a case, wishing to be a mediator for peace, having access to both parties, but equally uncertain of the reception of his mediation on either side? I must hesitate to take any public step, as by a proposition in Parliament, or by any other means, to drive the parties to an explanation upon any specific proposals; and yet I am very unwilling to let the session pass without some proposition, upon w^ch^ the parties may meet, if they sh^d^ be so inclined, as I suspect them to be. I have been endeavouring to feel pulses for some Months, but all is dumb show. I cannot say that I meet with any thing discouraging, to my apprehension, either as to the equitableness or practicability of the proposition for preliminaries. If I c^d^ but simply receive sufficient encouragement, that I sh^d^ not run any hazard of obstructing any other practicable propositions by obtruding mine, I sh^d^ be very much satisfied to come forward in that case with mine, to furnish a beginning at least, w^ch^ might lead to peace.

There is nothing that I wish so much, as to have an opportunity of [seeing] and conversing with you, having many things to say to you. But if that cannot yet happen, I have only to say, that whatever Communication you may think proper to make to me w^ch^ may lead to peace, you may be assured that I shall be most strenuous in applying it to that end. In all cases of difficulty in human life there must be Confidence somewhere, to enable us to extricate Nations from the evils attendant upon national disputes, as they arise out of national passions, jealousies, and points of honour. I am not sure, whether the extreme caution & diffidence of persons in political life be not the cause, allmost as frequently, of the unnecessary protraction of the Miseries of War, as of the final production of any superior National good to any state. Peace *now* is better than peace a twelvemonth hence, at least by all the lives that may be lost in the mean while, and by all the accumulated miseries that may intervene by that delay. When I speak of the necessity of confidence, I w^d^ not have you to think, that I trust to all professions, promiscuously, with Confidence; my thoughts are free respecting all parties; and for myself, if I thought it necessary for the end of attaining any additional confidence in your esteem, to enable me to coöperate the more effectually towards the restoration of peace, there is nothing that I w^d^ wish you to be assured of but this, that no fallacious offers of insincerity, nor any pretexts for covering secret designs, or for obtaining unfair advantages, shall never pass through my hands.

Believe me truly not only to be a lover of my own country, but a sincere friend to peace & to the rights of mankind and ever most affately yours,

D. HARTLEY.

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Observations by Mr. Hartley.

Lord North consented to Mr. Hartley's proposition, for endeavouring to procure from the American plenipotentiary or plenipotentiaries some opening, that they would be willing to commence a parley, on propositions of peace between Great Britain and America; and supposed the terms, which Mr. Hartley had in view, would be something like a tacit cession of independence to America, with a truce for a certain term of years, to serve as a basis for a general treaty of accommodation and final settlement.

This last application (which was made on the 20th of April, 1779,) of Mr. Hartley to Lord North, after several previous conferences on the subject, is the ground of the present confidential communication with Dr. Franklin, on the part of Mr. Hartley, who states to Dr. Franklin, as he did to Lord North, that an auspicious beginning of a negotiation is *dimidium facti*.

Mr. Hartley's ideas of the probable course of the negotiation would be to the following effect;

1. Five commissioners (or any three of them) to be appointed on the part of his Britannic Majesty to treat, consult, and agree upon the final settlement and pacification of the present troubles, upon safe, honourable, and permanent terms, subject to ratification by Parliament.

2. That any one of the aforesaid commissioners may be empowered to agree, as a preliminary, to a suspension of hostilities by sea and land, for a certain term of five or seven years.

3. That any one of the aforesaid commissioners be empowered to agree, as a second preliminary, to suspend the operation and effect of any and all acts of Parliament respecting America, for a certain term of five or seven years.

4. That it is expected, as a third preliminary, that America should be released, free and unengaged, from any treaties with foreign powers, which may tend to embarrass or defeat the present proposed negotiation.

5. That a general treaty for negotiation shall be set on foot as soon as may be, after the agreement of the foregoing preliminaries.

N.B. A doubt seeming to arise from Lord North, relative to the probability of any explanatory communication on the part of Dr. Franklin, Mr. Hartley expressed, he thought it possible, that, as a known friend to peace, he might be considered by Dr. Franklin as a depot of any communications, which may serve from time to time to facilitate the terms of peace; which therefore prevents this communication from being considered as any direct overture from Lord North to Dr. Franklin, or from Dr. Franklin to Lord North; but as it is merely a mediatorial proposition of Mr. Hartley, as a private person, for the purpose of bringing the parties to a parley.

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1003. TO DAVID HARTLEY (D. S. W.)

Passy, May 4, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I received your several Favours, viz. one of April the 10th, one of the 20th, and two of the 22d, all on the same Day, but by different Conveyances.

I need not repeat, what we have each of us so often repeated, the Wish for Peace. I will begin, by frankly assuring you, that tho' I think a direct, immediate Peace, the best Mode of present Accommodation for Britain, as well as for America, yet if that *is not* at this time practicable, and a Truce *is* practicable, I should not be against a Truce, but this is merely on Motives of *general Humanity*, to obviate the Evils Men devilishly inflict on Men in Time of War, and to lessen as much as possible the similarity of Earth and Hell. For with regard to particular Advantages, respecting the States I am connected with, I am persuaded it is theirs to continue the War, till England shall be reduced to that perfect impotence of Mischief, which alone can prevail with her to let other Nations enjoy "*Peace, Liberty, and Safety.*" I think, however, that a *short* Truce, which must, therefore, be an *armed* Truce, and put all Parties to an almost equal Expence with a continued War, is by no means desireable.

But this Proposition of a Truce, if made at all, should be made to France at the same time it is made to America. They have each of them too much Honour, as well as too much Sense, to listen separately to any Propositions which tend to separate them from each other.

I will now give you my Thoughts on your Ideas of a

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Negotiation, in the Order you have placed them. If you will number them in your Copy, you will readily see to which my Observations refer, and I may therefore be the more concise.

To the 1st, — I do not see the Necessity or Use of Five Commissioners. A Number of Talkers lengthen Discussions, and often embarrass instead of aiding a Settlement. Their different particular Views, private Interests, and Jealousies of each other, are likewise so many Rubs in the way; and it sometimes happens, that a Number cannot agree to what each privately thinks reasonable, and would have agreed to or perhaps proposed if alone. But this as the Parties please.

To the 2d, — The term of 21 Years would be better for all sides. The Suspension of Hostilities should be expressed to be between all the Parties at War; and that the British Troops and Ships of War now in any of the United States be withdrawn.

To the 3d, — This seems needless, and is a thing that may be done or omitted as you please; America has no concern about those Acts of Parliament.

To the 4th, — The Reason of proposing this is not understood, nor the Use of it, nor what Inducement there can be for us to agree to it. When you come to treat with both your Enemies, you may negotiate away as much of those Engagements as you can; but Powers who have made a firm solid League, evidently useful to both, can never be prevailed with to dissolve it for the vague expectation of another *in nubibus:* nor even on the Certainty, that another will be proposed, without knowing what are to be its Articles. America has no Desire of being free from her Engagements

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to France. The chief is, that of continuing the War in Conjunction with her, and not making a separate Peace; and this is an Obligation not in the power of America to dissolve, being an obligation of *Gratitude and Justice* towards a Nation, which is engaged in a War on her Account and for her Protection: and would be for ever binding, whether such an Article existed or not in the Treaty. And tho' it did not exist, an honest American would cut off his right Hand rather than sign an Agreement with England contrary to the Spirit of it.

To the 5th, — As soon as you please.

If you had mentioned France in your proposed Suspension of Arms, I should immediately have shewn it to the Minister, and have endeavoured to support that Idea. As it stands I am in doubt whether I shall communicate your Paper or not, tho' by your writing it so fair it seems as if you intended it. If I do, I shall acquaint you with the Result.

The Bill, of which you send me a Copy, was an excellent one at the time, and might have had great and good Effects, if instead of telling us haughtily that our humble Petition should receive no Answer, the Ministry had received and enacted that Bill into a Law. It might have erected a Wall of Brass round England, if such a Measure had been adopted, when Fryar Bacon's brazen Head cried out, TIME IS! But the wisdom of it was not seen, 'till after the fatal Cry of TIME 'S PAST![1] I am, my dear friend, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

[1] A slight paragraph of thanks to Mr. Hartley for his attention to the Exchange of Prisoners is here omitted. — ED.

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1004. TO M. DE SARTINE (D. S. W.)

Passy, May 8, 1779.

SIR, I have received the honour of your excellency's letter of the 3rd instant. I am very sensible of the king's goodness in granting liberty to the Americans who have been taken prisoners in the English service, as by that means his majesty lessens the number of prisoners that may be exchanged for his own subjects; and I think we ought, when ever we can, show our gratitude by procuring liberty for such of his subjects as may be in the same circumstances. We had in America, by the last accounts, many more prisoners of the enemy than they had of our people; and I will write to the Congress to advise the obtaining by an exchange the discharge of such French prisoners as may be confined in New York, that I have no doubt of its being done whenever the cartel shall take place there.

Captain Jones informs me that among the English prisoners brought from Senegal there are sixteen Americans, who, having been taken by the English in the unfortunate attack of Quebec, January 1, 1777, had been sent as slaves to Africa, and that they have petitioned to obtain their discharge, in order to serve under him and have an opportunity of taking satisfaction for the cruel treatment they have received. He has applied to the commandant for them, but has received for answer that, the garrison having surrendered conditionally, the troops in it should be sent to England; it is not in his power to give them up without orders from the court. Your excellency can best judge if this matter is practicable either

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by our replacing them with as many English or by any other means.

Captain Jones also writes to me that the officer mentioned in the enclosed memorial has been very useful in disciplining his marines, and that he wishes if possible to have him upon the cruise agreeable to his petition, which is therefore submitted to your excellency's consideration.

I am, with great respect.

[B. FRANKLIN.]

1005. TO M. DE CHAUMONT (D. S. W.)

Passy, May 10. 1779.

DEAR SIR: — I received the Letter you did me the honour to write to me the 1st inst. That inclos'd for the Marquis de la Fayette was sent to him directly. The other for M. de Sartine, was carried to Marly by my son; but he being at Paris, it was brought back and delivered to him there the next morning. His answer has been ever since expected to be return'd by your Express, but not arriving, we suppose he has sent it by some other opportunity. All Paris now talks of the Marquis de la Fayette's going to America with Troops, etc. From Holland I have certain Advice that the States-General have come to a Resolution to give Convoys to their Merchant Ships, notwithstanding the last memorial of S^r^ Joseph York; and to fit out immediately 32 Sail of Men-of-War for that purpose. This Resolution was taken the 26th past. With the greatest Esteem and Affection, I am ever, dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

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1006. TO JOHN ADAMS (M. H. S.)

Passy, May 10, 1779.

SIR: — I received the honour of yours of the 29th past from Nantes.[1] I hope you are before this time safely arrived at L'Orient. M. de la Luzerne is making diligent preparation for his departure, and you will soon see him. He and the secretary of the embassy are both very agreeable and sensible men, in whose conversation you will have a great deal of pleasure in your passage. What port the ships will be ordered to I have not yet learned. I suppose that may partly be left to the captain's discretion, as the winds may happen to serve. It must certainly be most agreeable to you to be landed in Boston, as that will give you an earlier sight of your family; but as you propose going immediately to Congress, being landed in Philadelphia will have some little advantage as it saves half your journey. I shall take care to procure the order to the captain from M. Sartine which you desire, though I should suppose showing the original letter of that minister, which you have, would be sufficient.

No public despatches are arrived here since you left us.

The anniversary of the signing of the treaty was observed with great festivity by the Congress at Philadelphia. From

[1] The original of this letter (April 29, 1779) is in A. P. S. John Adams refers in it to the affair of Elizabethtown, "by which it appears that the English were repulsed and lost the cattle and horses they had taken, and if they had not fled with uncommon dexterity they would have been *burgoinisses*, a technical term which I hope the Accademie will admit into the language by lawful authority." — ED.

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Holland I have just received the resolution of the States-General of the 26th, to convoy their trade, notwithstanding Sir Joseph York's memorial, and to fit out directly thirty-two ships of war for that purpose, which is good news, and may have consequences.

I have the honour to be, with great regard, sir, your most obedient and humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

1007. TO MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN BECKWITH[1]

Passy, May 17, 1779.

SIR,

Having assured you verbally that I had no authority to treat or agree with any military person, of any rank whatever, to go to America, I understand your expressions, that "*you will take your chance if I think you may be useful*," to mean, that you will go over without making any terms with me on a supposition, which you also mention, that my recommendation will be regarded by the Congress, and that you shall thereupon be employed in our armies.

Whoever has seen the high character given of you by Prince Ferdinand (under whom you served) to Lord Chatham, which I saw when in London, must think that so able an officer might have been exceedingly useful to our cause,

[1] From "The Private Correspondence of Benjamin Franklin." (W. T. F., London, 1818, Vol. I, p. 35.) General Beckwith commanded the 20th regiment at the battle of Minden, and he served afterwards in Germany. He had four sons who became distinguished general officers, among them Sir Thomas Sydney Beckwith. He sent to Dr. Franklin a copy of a letter, written by Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick to the Earl of Chatham, in 1767, highly commendatory of his character and military skill. — ED.

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if he had been in America at the beginning of the war. But there is a great difficulty at this time in introducing one of your rank into our armies, now that they are all arranged and fully officered; and this kind of difficulty has been found so great, and the Congress has been so embarrassed with numbers of officers from other countries, who arrived under strong recommendations, that they have been at above 100,000 livres expense to pay the charges of such officers in coming to America and returning to Europe, rather than hazard the discontent, the placing them to the prejudice of our own officers who had served from the beginning, would have occasioned.

Under these circumstances, they have not merely left me without authority, but they have in express terms forbid me to agree with or encourage by any means, the going over of officers to America in expectation of employment. As to my recommendation, whatever weight it might have had formerly, it has in several instances been so improperly employed through the too great confidence I had in recommendations from others, that I think it would at present be of no importance if it were necessary; but after that above mentioned of so great a general, and so good a judge of military merit as Prince Ferdinand, a character of you from me would be impertinence.

Upon the whole, I can only say, that, if you choose to go over and settle in our land of liberty, I shall be glad to find you there on my return as a fellow citizen, because I believe you will be a very good one, and respected there as such by the people. But I cannot advise or countenance your going thither with the expectation you mention. With great esteem, I have the honour to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

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1008. TO THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (L. C.)

Passy, May 26, 1779.

GENTLEMEN,

The Marquis de la Fayette, who arrived here the 11th of February, brought me yours of Oct 28, and the new Commission, Credentials, and Instructions, which the Congress have honour'd me with. I have not since had an Opportunity of writing, that I could trust; for I see, by several Instances, that the Orders given to private Captains to throw their Dispatches into the Sea, when likely to be taken, are sometimes neglected, and sometimes so badly executed, that the Letters are recovered by the Enemy, and much Inconvenience has attended their Interception. You mention, that you should speedily have Opportunities of forwarding Duplicates and Triplicates of these Papers; none of them has ever come to hand, nor have I received any other Line from you of later Date.

I immediately acquainted the Minister for Foreign Affairs with my Appointment, and communicated to him, as usual, a Copy of my Credential Letter, on which a Day was named for my Reception. A Fit of the Gout prevented my Attendance at that time, and for some Weeks after; but, as soon as I was able to go thro' the Ceremony, I went to Versailles, and was presented to the King, and received in all the Forms. I delivered the Letter of the Congress into his Majesty's own Hands, who, in the most gracious manner, expressed his satisfaction. And I have since constantly attended the Levee every Tuesday, with the other Foreign Ministers, and have taken every proper Occasion of repeating the

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Assurances I am instructed to give, of the grateful Sentiments of Congress, and their determin'd Resolution to fulfil religiously their Engagements. Much Pains is constantly taken by the Enemy to weaken the Confidence of this Court in their new Allies, by representing our People as weary of the War, and of the Government of Congress; which Body, too, they represent as distracted by Dissensions, &c.; but all this has very little Effect, and, when on some Occasions it has seem'd to make a little Impression, and create some Apprehensions, I have not found it difficult to remove them. And it is my firm Opinion, that, notwithstanding the great Losses suffered by the Commerce of this Kingdom, since the Commencement of the War, the Disposition of the Court to continue it (till its purpose of establishing our Independence is compleated) is not in the least changed, nor their Regard for us diminished.

The End of that Part of the Instructions, which relates to American Seamen taken by the French in English Ships, had already been obtain'd, Capt. Jones having had for some time an Order from Court, directed to the keepers of the Prisoners, requiring them to deliver to him such Americans as should be found in their Hands, that they might be at Liberty to serve under his Command. Most of them have accordingly been delivered to him, if not all. The Minister of the Marine, having entertain'd a high Opinion of him, from his Conduct and Bravery in taking the *Drake*, was desirous of employing him in the Command of a particular Enterprize, and to that end requested us to spare him, which we did, and sent the *Ranger* home, under the Command of his Lieutenant. Various Accidents have hitherto postpon'd his Equipment, but he now has the command of a 50 Gun

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Ship with some Frigates, all under American Commissions and Colours, fitted out at the King's Expence, and will sail, it is said, about the 1st of June.

The Marquis de la Fayette was, with some Land Troops, to have gone with him; but I now understand the Marquis is not to go, the Plan being a little changed.

The *Alliance* being weakly manned at first, and the Captain judging it necessary to be freed from 38 of his Men, who had been concern'd in a Conspiracy, and unwilling to take French Seamen, I thought it best to send him directly home, as his Ship might be of some Protection to the Vessels then about sailing to America, and Mr. Adams, who was desirous of returning soon, might be accommodated with a Passage in a swift-sailing Vessel. I accordingly offered her as a Convoy to the Trade at Nantes; but the Gentlemen concerned did not think fit to wait for her getting ready, as a French Convoy offer'd, for at least Part of the Voyage; and, the Minister requesting she might be added to Capt. Jones's little Squadron, and offering to give a Passage to Mr. Adams in the Frigate with the new Ambassador, and to compleat the *Alliance's* Complement of Men, I thought it best to continue her a little longer in Europe, hoping she may, in the projected Cruise, by her extraordinary Swiftness, be a means of taking Prisoners enough to redeem the rest of our Countrymen, now in the English Goals. With this View, as well as to oblige the Minister, I ordered her to join Capt. Jones at L'Orient, and obey his Orders, where she is now accordingly.

There have been great Misunderstandings between the Officers of that Ship and their Captain, and great Discontents among the latter for want of Clothes and Money.

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I have been obliged to make great Advances to appease those Discontents, and I now hope the Authority and Prudence of Capt. Jones will be able to remove, or at least prevent, the ill Effects of those Misunderstandings. The Conspirators are detain'd in Prison, and will remain there, subject to such Directions as Congress may think fit to give concerning them. The Courts here would not, because they properly could not, undertake to try them; and we had not Captains enough to make a Court-martial for the purpose. The sending them to America, with Evidence to convict them, will be a great Trouble and Expence; and perhaps their Offence cannot be so clearly made out, as to justify a Punishment sufficient to deter by its exemplary Severity. Possibly, the best Use, that can be made of them, is to give them in exchange for as many Americans in the Cartel now operating here. The perfidious Conduct of English and Scotch Sailors in our Service, a good deal discourages the Idea of taking them out of those Prisons in order to employ them.

This Cartel is at length brought about by the indefatigable Endeavours of an old Friend of mine, and a long declar'd one to America, Mr. Hartley, Member of Parliament for Hull. The Ship employed has already brought us one Cargo from the Prison at Plymouth. The number was intended for an Hundred, but prov'd 97, and she is return'd with as many in Exchange, to bring us a second Number from the Prison at Portsmouth. This is to continue till all are exchanged. The Americans are chiefly engag'd with Captains Jones and Landais. This Exchange is the more remarkable, as our people were all committed as for high Treason.

Agreable to the 7th Instruction, I have earnestly recommended the Reduction of Halifax and Quebec. The Mar-

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L'AMÉRIQUE INDÉPENDANTE.

After an engraving by A. Borel. From a rare print belonging to the Department of History of the Johns Hopkins University.

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quis de la Fayette joined me warmly in the Application for this purpose, and I hope we shall in due time see some good Effects from it. I have also in various Ways, and thro' various Channels, laid before the Ministry the distressed state of our Finances in America. There seems a great Willingness in all of them to help us, except in the Controller, M. Necker, who is said to be not well dispos'd towards us, and is suppos'd to embarras every Measure propos'd to relieve us by Grants of Money. It is certain, that under the Resolution, perhaps too hastily declar'd, of the King's imposing no new Taxes on his Subjects for this year, the Court has great Difficulties in defraying the present Expence, the vast Exertions to put the Navy in a Condition to equal that of England having cost immense Sums.

There is also a prevailing Opinion, that the most effectual Service to us is to be expected from rendering their Marine superior to that of England. The King has, however, to encourage our loan in Holland, been so good as to engage, under his Hand, to be Security for our Payment of the Interest of Three Millions of Livres; but that Loan has not yet amounted to more than about 80,000 Florins. Dr. Price, whose Assistance was requested by Congress, has declin'd that Service, as you will see by the Copy of his Letter enclos'd. To me it seems, that the Measure recommended by the Wisdom of Congress, for diminishing the Quantity of Paper by Taxes of large nominal Sums, must have very salutary Effects.

As to your Finances here, it is fit that you should know the state of them. When the Commissioners of Congress made the Proposition of paying the Interest at Paris of the Money borrowed in America, they understood the Loan to

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be of Five Million of Dollars. They obtained from Government Sums more than sufficient for the Interest of such a Sum. That Sum has been encreas'd; and, if they could otherwise have provided for it, they have been from time to time drain'd by a number of unforeseen Expences, of which the Congress had no Knowledge, and of others, occasion'd by their Orders and Drafts; and the Cargos sent to the Commissioners by the Committee have some of them been treacherously run away with by the Seamen, or taken by the Enemy, or, when arrived, have been hitherto applied towards the Payment of Debts, the Tobaccos to the Farmers-General according to Contract, and the Rice and Indigo to Messrs. Hortales & Co., from whom, by the way, we have not yet been able to procure any Account.

I have lately employ'd an Accountant, the Son of our Banker, to form compleat Books of our Accounts, to be sent to Congress. They are not yet ready. When they are, I shall send them by the first safe Opportunity. In the mean time, I may just mention some particulars of our Disbursements. Great Quantities of Clothing, Arms, Ammunition, and naval Stores, sent from time to time; Payment of Bills from Mr. Bingham, 100,000 Livres; Congress Bills in favour of Haywood & Co., above 200,000; advanc'd to Mr. Ross, about £20,000 sterling; Paid Congress Drafts in favour of return'd Officers, 93,080 livres. To our prisoners in England, and after their Escape to help them home, and to other Americans here in Distress, a great sum, I cannot at present say how much. Supplies to Mr. Hodge for fitting out Capt Cunningham, very considerable; for the Freights of Ships to carry over the Supplies, great sums; to Mr. W. Lee and Mr. Izard, £5,500 Sterling; and for fitting the Frigates

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Raleigh, Alfred, Boston, Providence, Alliance, Ranger, &c., I imagine not less than 60 or 70,000 livres each, taken one with another; and for the Maintenance of the English Prisoners, I believe, when I get in all the Accounts, I shall find 100,000 Livres not sufficient, having already paid above 65,000 on that Article. And now, the Drafts of the Treasurer of the Loans coming very fast upon me, the Anxiety I have suffered, and the Distress of Mind lest I should not be able to pay them, has for a long time been very great indeed.

To apply again to this Court for Money for a particular Purpose, which they had already over and over again provided for and furnish'd us, was extremely awkward. I therefore repeated the *general* Applications, which we had made when together, for Aids of Money; and received the general Answers, that the Expence of Government for the Navy was so great, that at present it was exceedingly difficult to furnish the necessary Supplies; that France, by sending a Fleet to America, obliged the Enemy to divide their Forces, and left them so weak on the Continent, as to aid us by lessening our Expence, if it could not by giving us Money, &c. &c.; and I was ask'd if we did not receive Money from Spain. I know, indeed, of some Money receiv'd from thence, and I have heard of more, but know not how much, Mr. A. Lee, as minister for Spain, having taken to himself all the Management of that Affair, and will account to Congress. I only understand, that there is none of it left to assist in paying Congress Bills.

I at length obtain'd, as above mentioned, the King's *Bon* for Payment of the Interest of Three Millions, if I could borrow it in Holland, or elsewhere; but, tho' two eminent

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Houses in Amsterdam have undertaken it, and had Hopes of Success, they have both lately written to me, that the great Demands of Money for Germany and for England had raised Interest above our Limits, and that the Successes of the English in Georgia and St. Lucia, and in destroying the French Trade, with the suppos'd Divisions in Congress, all much magnified by the British Minister, and the pressing Application to borrow by several of our States separately, had made the money'd People doubtful of our Stability, as well as our Ability to repay what might be lent us, and that it was necessary to wait a more favourable moment for proceeding with our Loan.

In this Situation, I have been applied to by Mr. William Lee, and lately, thro' our Banker, by Mr. Izard, for more Money for their Expences; and I am told, there is much Anger against me for declining to furnish them, and that I am charg'd with *disobeying an Order of Congress*,[1] and with cruelly attempting to distress Gentlemen, who are in the Service of their Country. They have, indeed, produc'd to me a Resolve of Congress, *impowering them to draw* on the Commissioners in France for their Expences at Foreign Courts; and doubtless Congress, when that Resolve was made, intended to enable us to pay those Drafts; but, as that has not been done, and the Gentlemen (except Mr. Lee for a few Weeks) have not incurred any Expence at Foreign Courts, and, if they had, the 5,500 guineas, received by them in about 9 Months, seem'd an ample Provision for it, and as both of them might command Money from England,

[1] Letter from Izard to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, January 28, 1779, in "The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States." Wharton, Vol. III, p. 33. — ED.

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I do not conceive that I *disobey'd an Order* of Congress, and that, if I did, the Circumstances will excuse it; and I could have no intention to distress them, because I must know it is out of my Power, as their private Fortunes and Credit will enable them at all times to pay their own Expences.

In short, the dreadful Consequences of Ruin to our Public Credit, both in America and Europe, that must attend protesting a single Congress Draft for Interest, after our Funds were out, would have weigh'd with me against the Payment of more Money to those Gentlemen, if the Demand had otherwise been well founded. I am, however, in the Judgment of Congress; and, if I have done amiss, must submit dutifully to their Censure. Thanks to God, I have this last Week got over the Difficulty, so far as relates to the Bills which will all be punctually paid; but if the Navy Board sends more Ships here to be fitted, or the Congress continue to draw for the Payment of other Debts, the Ships will be disappointed, and I shall probably be made a Bankrupt, unless Funds are at the same time sent over to discharge such Demands.

With regard to the Fitting out of Ships, receiving and disposing of Cargoes, and purchasing of Supplies, I beg leave to mention, that, besides my being wholly unacquainted with such Business, the Distance I am at from the Ports renders my having any thing to do with it extreamly inconvenient. Commercial Agents have indeed been appointed by Mr. William Lee; but they and the captains are continually writing for my Opinion or Orders, or leave to do this and that, by which much time is lost to them, and much of mine taken up to little purpose, from my Ignorance.

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I see clearly, however, that many of the Captains are exorbitant in their Demands, and in some cases I think those demands are too easily comply'd with by the Agents, perhaps because their Commissions are in proportion to the Expence. I wish, therefore, the Congress would appoint the Consuls they have a right to appoint by the Treaty, and put into their Hands all that sort of Employment. I have in my Desk, I suppose, not less than Fifty Applications from different Ports, praying the Appointment, and offering to serve *gratis* for the Honour of it, and the Advantage it gives in Trade; but I should imagine, that, if consuls are appointed, they will be of our own People from America, who, if they should make Fortunes abroad, might return with them to their Country.

The Commissions demanded by the Agents seem to me in some cases very high. For instance, Mr. Schweighauser, in a late Acc^{t}, charges 5 per cent on the simple Delivery of the Tobaccos to the Officer of the Farmers-General in the Port, and by that means makes the Commission on the Delivery of the two last Cargoes amount to about £630 Sterling. As there was no Sale in the Case, he has, in order to calculate the Commission, valued the Tobacco at 90 livres the hundred weight; whereas, it was, by our contract with the Farmers, to be delivered at about 40 livres. I got a Friend, who was going upon Change, to inquire among the Merchants what was the Custom in such Cases of Delivery. I send enclos'd the Result he has given me of his Enquiries. In consequence, I have refus'd to pay the Commission of 5 per cent on this Article; and I know not why it was, as is said, agreed with him at the time of his Appointment, that he should have 5 per cent on his Transactions, if the Custom is only 2 per cent, as by my Information.

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I have mentioned above the applications of separate States to borrow Money in Europe, on which I beg leave to remark, that, when the General Congress are endeavouring to obtain a Loan, these separate Attempts do interfere, and are extreamly inconvenient, especially where some of the Agents are empower'd to offer a higher Interest, and some have Powers in that respect unlimited. We have likewise lately had Applications from three several States to this Court, to be furnish'd with great Quantities of Arms, Ammunition, and Cloathing, or with Money upon Credit to buy them; and from one State to be supply'd with Naval Stores and Ships of War. These Agents, finding that they had not Interest to obtain such Grants, have severally applied to me, and seem to think it my Duty, as Minister for the United States, to support and enforce their particular Demands. I have endeavoured to do so; but I find the Ministers do not like these separate Applications, and seem to think, that they should properly come only thro' Congress, to whom the several States in such Cases ought first to make known their Wants, and then the Congress could instruct their Minister accordingly. This would save the King's Ministers a good deal of Trouble, and the several States the Expence of these particular Agents; concerning whom I would add a little Remark, that we have in America, too readily, in various instances, given Faith to the Pretensions of Strangers from Europe, who offer their Services as Persons who have powerful Friends and great Interest in their own Country, and by that means obtain Contracts, Orders, or Commissions, to procure what we want, and who, when they come here, are totally unknown, and have no other Credit but what such Commissions give them, or, if known, the Commissions do

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not add so much to *their* Credit as they diminish that of their Employers.

I have received two Letters from a Frenchman, settled in one of the Ports of Barbary, offering himself to act as our Minister with the Emperor, with whom he pretended to be intimate, and acquainting me, that his Imperial Majesty wonder'd we had never sent to thank him for being the first Power on this side of the Atlantick that had acknowledg'd our Independence, and opened his Ports to us; advising that we should send the Emperor a Present. On enquiry at the Office in whose department Africa is included, I learnt the Character of this Man to be such, that it was not safe to have any Correspondence with him, and therefore I did not answer his Letters. I suppose Congress has receiv'd the Memorial we presented to this Court respecting the Barbary States, and requesting the King's good Offices with them, agreable to the Treaty; and also the Answer, expressing the King's Readiness to perform those good Offices whenever the Congress should send us Instructions, and make Provision for the necessary Presents;[1] or, if those Papers have not yet got to hand, they will be found among the Copies carried over by Mr. Adams, and therefore I only mention them by way of Remembrance. Whenever a Treaty with this Emperor shall be intended, I suppose some of our naval Stores will be an acceptable Present, and the Expectation of continu'd Supplies of such Stores, a powerful Motive for entering into and continuing a Friendship.

[1] See Commissioners to Vergennes, August 28, 1778; Sartine to Vergennes, September 20, 1778; Vergennes to Commissioners, September 27, 1778, in "The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States," Wharton, Vol. II. — ED.

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I should send you Copies of several other Memorials and publick Papers; but, as Mr. Adams goes in the same Ship, and has the whole of our Transactions during his Time, it is not so necessary by this Vessel. The disposition of this Nation in general continues friendly towards us and our Cause; and I do not see the least diminution of it, except among the West India Merchants and Planters, whose losses have render'd them a little discontented. Spain has been long acting as a Mediator, but arming all the time most vigorously. Her naval Force is now very great indeed, and, as her last Proposition of a long Truce, in which America should be included and treated as independent in fact, tho' not expressly acknowledged as such, has been lately rejected by England, it is now thought, that her open Junction with France in the War is not far distant.

The Commissioners here have a Power in general Terms to treat of Peace, Friendship, and Commerce with European States, but I apprehend this is scarce explicit enough to authorize me to treat of such a Truce, if the Proposition should again come upon the *Tapis*. I therefore wish the Congress to consider of it, and give such Powers as may be necessary to whom they may think proper, that, if a favourable Opportunity of making an advantageous Treaty should offer, it may not be missed.

Admiral Arbuthnot, who was going to America with a large Convoy and some Troops, has been detain'd by a little Attempt upon Jersey; and contrary Winds, since that Affair was over, have detain'd him further, till within these few days.

Since I began writing this Letter, I have received a packet from the Committee, by way of Statia and Holland, sent by

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Mr. Lovel, containing his Letters of December 8, January 29, and Feb. 8, with one from the President, dated Jan. 3. Several Papers are mention'd as sent with them, and by other Opportunities, but none are come to hand, except the Resolution to postpone the attempt upon Canada; and these are the first Dispatches received here since the Date of those sent by the Marquis de la Fayette. I have also just received a letter from Mr. Bingham, acquainting me, that the ship *Dean*, and the *General Gates*, are just arriv'd at Martinico, and apply to him to be careened, refitted, and procure a fresh Supply of Provisions; and that, tho' he has no Orders, he must draw upon me for the Expence. I think it right to acquaint you thus early, that I shall be oblig'd to protest his Bills.

I have just obtain'd from his Majesty Orders to the Government of Guadaloupe, to make reasonable Reparation to Captain Giddins of Newbury for the Loss of his Vessel, sunk in mistake by a Battery of that Island. Great Preparations are now making here, with much Activity in all the SeaPorts, taking up Transports, and building small Vessels, proper for the landing of Troops, &c.; so that many think an Invasion of England or Ireland is intended. The Intention, whatever it is, may change; but the Opinion of such an Intention, which seems to prevail in England, may tend to keep their Troops and Ships at home.

General and Lord Howe, Generals Cornwallis and Grey, Col. Montresor, Capt. Hammond, and others, have formally given it as their Opinion, in Parliament, that the Conquest of America is impracticable. This Week, as we hear, John Maxwell, Esq., Joseph Galloway, Esq., Andrew Allen, Esq., John Patterson, Theophilus Morris, Enoch Storey, and Jabez Fisher, are to be examined to prove the contrary.

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One would think the first Set were likely to be the best Judges.

Be pleased to present my dutiful Respects to the Congress, and assure them of my most faithful Services. I have the honour to be, gentlemen

Your most obedient
& most humble Servant,
B. FRANKLIN.

1009. TO SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM [1]

Passy, May 27, 1779.

SIR,

I should sooner have sent this passport, but that I hoped to have had the other from this court in time to send with it. If you should stay a few days in England, and will let me know how it may be directed to you, I can send it to you per post.

I received some time since a letter from a person at Belfast, informing me, that a great number of people in those parts were desirous of going to settle in America, if passports could be obtained for them and their effects, and referring me to you for further information. I shall always be ready to afford every assistance and security in my power to such under-

[1] From "The Private Correspondence of Benjamin Franklin" (W. T. F.), London, 1818, Vol. I, p. 37. Sir Edward Newenham (1732–1814) was one of the most constant and intimate of Franklin's correspondents. He was a politician who represented the County of Dublin from 1776 to 1797. He wrote numerous political tracts under the pen-names Brutus and Leonidas. He was in entire sympathy with the colonists in the Revolution. Upon the arrival of the news of General Montgomery's death he appeared in Parliament in deep mourning, "deeper even," as he said, "than his own brother." Unfortunately the letters addressed to him by Franklin appear to have been destroyed. — ED.

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takings, when they are really meant, and are not merely schemes of trade with views of introducing English manufactures into America, under pretence of their being the substance of persons going there to settle.

I admire the spirit with which I see the Irish are at length determined to claim some share of that freedom of commerce, which is the right of all mankind, but which they have been so long deprived of by the abominable selfishness of their fellow subjects. To enjoy all the advantages of the climate, soil, and situation in which God and nature have placed us, is as clear a right as that of breathing; and can never be justly taken from men but as a punishment for some atrocious crime.

The English have long seemed to think it a right, which none could have but themselves. Their injustice has already cost them dear, and, if persisted in, will be their ruin. I have the honour to be with great esteem, Sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

1010. TO COMTE DE VERGENNES (?)[1]

(P. A. E. E. U.)

June 1, 1779

THE refusal of the Director-General to accede to the proposition of Mr. Franklin and his pressing needs determine him, that he may have nothing wherewithal to reproach himself if the events follow which he apprehends, to renew his appeal to the administration. To avoid them, therefore, he asks one million as a loan. Although this sum will not suffice for his

[1] The translation of this document into French is endorsed "enclosing blank promissory note with coupons." — ED.

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necessities, he hopes that before it will be all used he will receive other supplies, either from America or by borrowing, for which he has authority, and for which he has caused to be printed the promissory notes of the thirteen States, reimbursable in ten years at Paris, with annual interest. He offers these notes at par, and if the administration fails to realize on them before they fall due, he engages to take them up with the first funds which he shall have available for that purpose.

Although by this arrangement the operation appears more like an investment than a benefaction, Mr. Franklin will none the less appreciate the service which will be rendered, and which, he may add, the interest of the two nations makes a necessity to-day, if they would not expose themselves to lose the fruit of their union.

B. FRANKLIN.

1011. TO HORATIO GATES [1] (D. S. W.)

Passy, June 2, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I received your obliging letter by the Chevalier de Raymondis, who appears extremely sensible of the civilities he received at Boston, and very desirous of being serviceable to the American cause. His wound is not yet right, as he tells me there is a part of the bone still to be cut off. But he is otherwise well and cheerful, and has a great respect for you.

The pride of England was never so humbled by any thing as by your capitulation of Saratoga. They have not yet got over it, though a little elevated this spring by their success

[1] At that time Major-General in the American army. — S.

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against the French commerce. But the growing apprehension of having Spain too upon their hands has lately brought them down to an humble seriousness, that begins to appear even in ministerial discourses, and the papers of ministerial writers. All the happy effects of that transaction for America are not generally known. I may some time or other acquaint the world with some of them. When shall we meet again in cheerful converse, talk over our adventures, and finish with a quiet game of chess?

The little dissensions between particular States in America are much magnified in England, and they once had great hopes from them. I consider them, with you, as the effects of apparent security; which do not affect the grand points of independence, and adherence to treaties; and which will vanish at a renewed appearance of danger. This court continues heartily our friend, and the whole nation are warm in our favour; excepting only a few West Indians, and merchants in that trade, whose losses make them a little uneasy. With sincere and great esteem and affection, I am ever, dear Sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

1012. TO JAMES LOVELL (L. C.)

Passy, June 2, 1779.

SIR,

I received a few Days since, via Eustatia and Holland, the Triplicates of your several Favours, of Dec. 8, Jan. 29, and Feb. 8. The preceding Copies of the same Dates never came to hand. I thank you very much for the Newspapers, tho' the Disputes I see in them give me pain. You observe

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rightly, that the want of good Conveyances obstructs much the Punctuality of your Correspondence. The Number of long Letters I have written to America has almost discouraged me from writing, except by such an Opportunity as this. You may judge of the Uncertainty of Letters getting to hand, when I tell you, that tho' you mention having sent me Quadruplicates of my Credentials, only those by the Marquis de la Fayette have yet appeared.

I am glad to understand, that you are taking Measures to restore the Value of your Money, by taxing largely to reduce the Quantity. I believe no Financier in the World can put you upon a more effectual Method. The English have had a little Flow of Spirits, lately, from their Success against the Trade of France, and the News of their imagined Conquest of Georgia; but the growing Apprehension of a War with Spain, also, begins to sober 'em, and, like People who have been drunk with Drams, they now seem to have both the Head and Heart ake. The late Letters from thence are in more humble Stile, and some Printed Papers by the last Post, known to be ministerial, appear intended to prepare the Minds of the People for Propositions of Peace. But these Ebbs and Flows are common with them, and the Duration of neither are to be relied on.

As I do not find, by any of yours, that a long Letter of mine to you in July last, has come to hand, I send you herewith a Copy of it (tho' now a little Stale), as it serves to show my continu'd good Opinion of a Gentleman,[1] who, by the Papers you have sent me, seems to be hardly us'd. I have never meddled with the Dispute between him and Mr. Lee, but the Suspicion of having a Good Will to him has drawn upon me a

[1] Silas Deane. — ED.

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great deal of Ill Will from his Antagonist. The Congress have wisely enjoyned their Ministers in Europe to agree with one another. I had always resolved to have no Quarrel, and have therefore made it a constant Rule to answer no angry, affronting, or abusive Letters, of which I have received many, and long ones, from Mr. Lee and Mr. Izard, who, I understand, and see indeed by the Papers, have been writing liberally, or rather illiberally, against me, to prevent, as one of them says here, any Impressions my writing against them might occasion to their Prejudice; but I have never before mention'd them in any of my Letters.

Our Scheme here for Pacquet-Boats did not continue.[1] I wish Congress could fall upon some Method of sending some little light Vessels once a Month, to keep up a Correspondence more regularly. Even the receiving Letters of a certain Date, tho' otherwise of no Importance, might serve to refute the false News of our Adversaries on both sides the Water, which have sometimes too long their intended Effect before the Truth arrives. I see that frequently little Pilot Boats, of 25 or 30 Tons' burthen, arrive safe from Virginia; the Expence of such would not be great.

I beg leave to recommend earnestly to your Civilities M. le Chevalier de la Luzerne, who goes over to succeed M. Gérard, as the King's Minister to the Congress. He bears here a most amiable Character, has great Connections, and is a hearty Friend to the American Cause. With great Esteem, I am, Sir, &c.

[B. FRANKLIN.]

[1] See "Diplomatic Correspondence (Sparks)," Vol. I, p. 284. — ED.

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1013. TO CHARLES CARROLL OF CARROLLTON

(D. S. W.)

Passy, June 2, 1779

DEAR SIR, This will be delivered to you by the Chevalier de la Luzerne, who succeeds M. Gérard. He is a Gentleman of a most amiable Character here, and a sincere Wellwisher to America. As such I beg leave to recommend him to your Civilities. You must have heard much of M. de Malesherbes, Son of the Chancellor Lamoignon, and late President of the *Cour des Aides*, famous for his Eloquent, free and strong Remonstrances to the king. This Gentleman is his nephew.

Correspondence between friends in America and Europe is now miserably cut to pieces by the Captures of Vessels. When one writes and the Letters do not get to hand, or if they get to hand the answers miscarry, by degrees we may come to forget one another. But I shall never forget the Pleasure I had in your Company on our Journey to Canada. Please to remember me when you write to your other *compagnons de voyage*,[1] and believe me ever, with sincere Esteem and Affection, dear sir,

Your most obedient and most humble Servant.

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. In looking over a Letter you favoured me with, dated August 12, 1777, and which gave me great Satisfaction at the time, I find one passage which I did not then answer. It relates to the sending over artificers of various kinds.

[1] John Carroll and Samuel Chase (Commissioners to Canada in 1776). —ED.

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You can have no conception of the Numbers that apply to me with that View, and who would go over if I could assist them by obtaining a passage for them without expence. If this should be thought useful, and Congress could afford the charge, and could confide in my judgement of the Persons and knowledge of the Arts wanted among us, I am persuaded I could send you over many people who would be valuable acquisitions to our Country.

1014. TO THE MARINE COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS (D. S. W.)

June 2, 1779.

GENTLEMEN: — I received the Honour of yours by the Marquis de la Fayette, who arrived safe and well in the *Alliance* frigate, which you were pleased to put under my Orders.

There has been a Conspiracy on board to seize and run away with the Ship to England. Thirty-eight of the crew concerned in the Plot were brought in under Confinement, and the Captain was much embarrassed with them, and suspicious of many more. We would not try them here for want of Officers sufficient to make a Court-Martial. The French Admiralty could not take cognizance of their offence. The Captain objected to carrying them back, as both troublesome and dangerous. In fine we got leave to land and confine them in a French Prison, where they continue till further orders.

Captain Landais desired much to have his Ship sheathed

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here with copper, but having neither Orders nor Money in my hands for that purpose, I was obliged to refuse it. There was a great Misunderstanding between him and his Officers, and a great Discontent among the Officers themselves, who were in want of Cloathing and Money; the Ship, too, tho' new, wanted great Repairs, all her Iron Work being bad: The Agent, Mr. Schweighauser, required my orders about every thing, and I had Letters from him, from the Officers, or from the Captain by almost every Post. My total unacquaintance with such Business made it very perplexing to me. I have got thro' it at last, and I hear the officers are more contented, but I hope to have no more such affairs on my hands: Being informed by the Officer who came up from the Captain with the Dispatches, that he had not hands sufficient to man Prizes if she should be sent on a Cruise; that the Captain did not care to supply the Deficiency with Frenchmen; that if she were again at Boston, now that her Character for a swift Sailer, and that of the Captain for a good Officer, were established, of which the Seamen were before doubtful, there was the greatest probability that she would be fully mann'd immediately; and as Mr. Adams wish'd for an Opportunity of going home, and I heard that some Ships were bound to North America from Nantes, to whom the Convoy of a Frigate quite to the American Coast might be convenient, I determined to send her back directly, and accordingly offer'd her as Convoy to the Trade. But as M. de la Motte Picquet was about to sail from Brest with a Squadron before our frigate could be fitted, and as he offer'd to take care of all outward-bound Ships who should join him at Brest, the offer I made was not accepted. All the American Ships went from Nantes to join his Fleet. She

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was, however, still to go with Mr. Adams, but receiving the enclosed letter from M. de Sartine, Minister of the Marine, who at the same time offered to man her compleatly if I comply'd with his Request, I thought it right to oblige him, as the Inconvenience would be only a little longer Delay to Mr. Adams in getting home, and by her extremely swift sailing, of which they relate Wonders, she might in the proposed Cruize take Prisoners enough to redeem by the now establish'd Cartel the rest of our unfortunate Countrymen still in the English Prisons. I accordingly acquainted M. de Sartine that I would, agreable to his desire, order her to L'Orient, where she now is, a Part of Capt. Jones' little Squadron, which is ready to sail, if not already sailed, on the intended Expedition.

After all this was thus arranged, Mr. Arthur Lee wrote to me to urge the sending her with the Merchant-Ships, and to carry over some Dispatches of his and Mr. Izard's that were of great Importance, but as those Ships were by this time sailed, and the French frigate with the new Minister and Mr. Adams was to sail in a Week or two, and might carry those Dispatches, the Contents of which I was not acquainted with, I did not see the Necessity of retracting the Promise I had made to the Minister, and thereby deranging the Expedition.

As our Ships of War that arrive here require an amazing Expence to outfit them, and the Prizes they bring in often occasion Lawsuits and all the Embarrassment and Sollicitation and Vexation attending Suits in this Country, I must beg the Committee would be so good as to order the several Navy Boards to send no more to be outfitted here, without sending Effects to defray the Expence, and that if our armed

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Ships should be still ordered to cruise in these seas, a Consul or Consuls may be appointed in the several SeaPorts, who will thereby be more at hand to transact maritime Business expeditiously, will understand it better, relieve your Minister at this Court from a great deal of Trouble, and leave him at liberty to attend affairs of more general Importance

With great Esteem and Respect, I have the honour Gentlemen, to be your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

1015. TO JOHN JAY[1] (D. S. W.)

Passy, June 2, 1779

DEAR SIR, I received a few Days since, by way of St. Eustachia, the Duplicate of a Letter you did me the honour to write to me of 3d January. But the Act of Congress of Dec. 23, which you mention, is not yet come to hand.

Col. Diricks, whom the Secretary names to you, called here in his way to Holland, and brought me a Recommendatory Letter from Gov^r Trumbull, but neither himself nor that letter mentioned any thing of his Business in Holland, except to see his friends; so that I yet know of nothing to the purport of that act. The other, of January 1st, is come to hand. Besides the Reasons given in it for deferring the Expedition to Canada, there is one that would weigh much with me, and that is our Want of Sufficient Quantity of hard Money. The Canadians are afraid of Paper, and would never take the Congress Money. To enter a Country which you mean to make a friend of, with an army that must have occasion

[1] This letter is erroneously dated June 9th in Wharton and Bigelow. — ED.

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every Day for fresh Provision, Horses, Carriage labour of every kind, having no acceptable Money to pay to those that serve you, and to be obliged, therefore, from the Necessity of the Case, to take that Service by Force, is the sure way to disgust, offend, and by Degrees make Enemies of the whole People, after which all your operations will be more difficult, all your Motions discover'd, and every endeavour used to have you driven back out of their Country.

I need not recommend the Chevalier de la Luzerne to the President of Congress. His public Character will recommend him sufficiently to all the respect and Consideration due to the Minister of so great and good a Prince as the king of France, our Ally. I shall only mention that his private Character here is an excellent one, and that he is connected by relation to some of the greatest and best People of this Country. I hope that his Residence with us will be made agreable to him. I have written largely to the Committee. By our last Advices from Holland the English Interest diminishes there, and from England they write that the daily apprehension of a War with Spain begins to have a serious effect in disposing People generally to wish for Peace. Great Preparations are making here in all the SeaPorts, and this Summer will probably produce some important Action. With great respect and Esteem, etc., etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

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1016. TO RICHARD BACHE [1] (D. S. W.)

Passy, June 2, 1799.

DEAR SIR, I have received yours of June [January?] 16. You observe that you seldom hear from me. I have the same reason to complain, but I do not complain of you. It is the Loss of Ships, and the Sinking of Dispatches when chased that cuts our Correspondence to pieces.

Yours of Oct. 22 gave me a good deal of satisfaction in informing me of the Adventures of your Family, your return to Philad[a], Welfare, etc.

You desire me to set the Price of the printing-house sold to Virginia; but I have received no Account of the Particulars whereof it consisted. Did they take the Cases as well as the Types, and what were the number? There was a large Mahogany Press that cost me 25 Guineas, and a Small one that cost 12 Guineas. Did they take those? And did they take all the Letters, flowers, &c. &c. except the five Cases of Money Types which you say the Congress have taken? . . . I hope, indeed, they did not take the Presses; for I should be unwilling to part with them, as they were made under my own Inspection, with Improvements; and also a Stone belonging to the press, and a Number of Iron Chases, or Frames for fixing the Pages, and many other things which I know not whether they have taken or not, which may be valued by any Printer.

The Script Letters which the Congress have taken cost me double the Price of common Letters of the same sizes;

[1] Erroneously dated June 9th in Wharton and Bigelow. — ED.

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the long Pica and long primer Bill I remember amounted to forty pound Sterling. What I gave for the larger sort I have forgotten, but suppose about ten Pounds. You may therefore settle that in the same manner as to the advance, &c. And when you are paid you may send [End of Record.]

1017. TO RICHARD BACHE (D. S. W.)

Passy, June 2, 1779.

——I AM very easy about the efforts Messrs. Lee and Izard are using, as you tell me, to injure me on that side of the water. I trust in the justice of the Congress, that they will listen to no accusations against me, that I have not first been acquainted with, and had an opportunity of answering. I know those gentlemen have plenty of ill will to me, though I have never done to either of them the smallest injury, or given the least just cause of offence. But my too great reputation, and the general good will this people have for me, and the respect they show me, and even the compliments they make me, all grieve those unhappy gentlemen; unhappy indeed in their tempers, and in the dark, uncomfortable passions of jealousy, anger, suspicion, envy, and malice. It is enough for good minds to be affected at other people's misfortunes; but they, that are vexed at everybody's good luck, can never be happy. I take no other revenge of such enemies, than to let them remain in the miserable situation in which their malignant natures have placed them, by endeavouring to support an estimable character; and thus, by continuing the reputation the world has hitherto indulged me

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with, I shall continue them in their present state of damnation; and I am not disposed to reverse my conduct for the alleviation of their torments.

I am surprised to hear, that my grandson, Temple Franklin, being with me, should be an objection against me, and that there is a cabal for removing him.[1] Methinks it is rather some merit, that I have rescued a valuable young man from the danger of being a Tory, and fixed him in honest republican Whig principles; as I think, from the integrity of his disposition, his industry, his early sagacity, and uncommon abilities for business, he may in time become of great service to his country. It is enough that I have lost my *son;* would they add my *grandson?* An old man of seventy, I undertook a winter voyage at the command of the Congress, and for the public service, with no other attendant to take care of me. I am continued here in a foreign country, where, if I am sick, his filial attention comforts me, and, if I die, I have a child to close my eyes and take care of my remains. His dutiful behaviour towards me, and his diligence and fidelity in business, are both pleasing and useful to me. His conduct, as my private secretary, has been unexceptionable, and I am confident the Congress will never think of separating us.

I have had a great deal of pleasure in Ben too.[2] He is a

[1] Richard Bache wrote to Franklin (October 22, 1779): "I am informed they [Lee and Izard] lay some stress upon your employing as a private secretary, your grandson, whom they hold out as unfit to be trusted, because of his father's principles. This has been hinted to me; but this be so or not, sure I am, that this was an argument made use of by your friend Mr Roberdeau, upon the votes being called for, on your Late appointment [plenipotentiary] and he had influence enough to carry the vote against you for this state, and it seems pretty remarkable that this State was the only one that voted against you on this question." — Ed.

[2] Benjamin Franklin Bache. — Ed.

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good, honest lad, and will make, I think, a valuable man. He had made as much proficiency in his learning, as the boarding school he was at could well afford him; and, after some consideration where to find a better for him, I at length fixed on sending him to Geneva. I had a good opportunity by a gentleman of that city;[1] who had a place for him in his chaise, and has a son about the same age at the same school. He promised to take care of him, and enclosed I send you the letters I have since received relating to him and from him. He went very cheerfully, and I understand is very happy. I miss his company on Sundays at dinner. But, if I live, and I can find a little leisure, I shall make the journey next spring to see him, and to see at the same time *the old thirteen United States* of Switzerland.

Thanks be to God, I continue well and hearty. Undoubtedly I grow older, but I think the last ten years have made no great difference. I have sometimes the gout, but they say that is not so much a disease as a remedy. God bless you. I am your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN.

1018. TO MRS. SARAH BACHE (D. S. W.)

Passy, June 3, 1779.

DEAR SALLY,

I have before me your letters of October 22d and January 17th. They are the only ones I received from you in the course of eighteen months. If you knew how happy your letters make me, and considered how many miscarry, I think you would write oftener.

[1] A Mr. Cramer; see letter to him. — ED.

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I am much obliged to the Miss Cliftons for the kind care they took of my house and furniture. Present my thankful acknowledgments to them, and tell them I wish them all sorts of happiness.

The clay medallion of me you say you gave to Mr. Hopkinson was the first of the kind made in France. A variety of others have been made since of different sizes; some to be set in the lids of snuffboxes, and some so small as to be worn in rings; and the numbers sold are incredible. These, with the pictures, busts, and prints, (of which copies upon copies are spread everywhere,) have made your father's face as well known as that of the moon, so that he durst not do any thing that would oblige him to run away, as his phiz would discover him wherever he should venture to show it. It is said by learned etymologists, that the name *doll*, for the images children play with, is derived from the word IDOL. From the number of *dolls* now made of him, he may be truly said, *in that sense*, to be *i-doll-ized* in this country.

I think you did right to stay out of town till the summer was over, for the sake of your child's health. I hope you will get out again this summer, during the hot months; for I begin to love the dear little creature from your description of her.

I was charmed with the account you gave me of your industry, the tablecloths of your own spinning, &c.; but the latter part of the paragraph, that you had sent for linen from France, because weaving and flax were grown dear, alas, that dissolved the charm; and your sending for long black pins, and lace, and *feathers!* disgusted me as much as if you had put salt into my strawberries. The spinning, I see, is laid aside, and you are to be dressed for the ball! You seem

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not to know, my dear daughter, that, of all the dear things in this world, idleness is the dearest, except mischief.

The project you mention, of removing Temple from me was an unkind one. To deprive an old man, sent to serve his country in a foreign one, of the comfort of a child to attend him, to assist him in health and take care of him in sickness, would be cruel, if it was practicable. In this case it could not be done; for, as the pretended suspicions of him are groundless, and his behaviour in every respect unexceptionable, I should not part with the child, but with the employment. But I am confident, that, whatever may be proposed by weak or malicious people, the Congress is too wise and too good to think of treating me in that manner.

Ben, if I should live long enough to want it, is like to be another comfort to me. As I intend him for a Presbyterian as well as a republican, I have sent him to finish his education at Geneva. He is much grown, in very good health, draws a little, as you will see by the enclosed, learns Latin, writing, arithmetic, and dancing, and speaks French better than English. He made a translation of your last letter to him, so that some of your works may now appear in a foreign language. He has not been long from me. I send the accounts I have of him, and I shall put him in mind of writing to you. I cannot propose to you to part with your own dear Will. I must one of these days go back to see him; happy to be once more all together! but futurities are uncertain. Teach him, however, in the mean time, to direct his worship more properly, for the deity of Hercules is now quite out of fashion.

The present you mention as sent by me was rather that of a merchant at Bordeaux; for he would never give me any

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account of it, and neither Temple nor I know any thing of the particulars.

When I began to read your account of the high prices of goods, "a pair of gloves, $7; a yard of common gauze, $24, and that it now required a fortune to maintain a family in a very plain way," I expected you would conclude with telling me, that everybody as well as yourself was grown frugal and industrious; and I could scarce believe my eyes in reading forward, that "there never was so much pleasure and dressing going on;" and that you yourself wanted black pins and feathers from France to appear, I suppose, in the mode! This leads me to imagine, that perhaps it is not so much that the goods are grown dear, as that the money is grown cheap, as every thing else will do when excessively plenty; and that people are still as easy nearly in their circumstances, as when a pair of gloves might be had for half a crown. The war indeed may in some degree raise the prices of goods, and the high taxes which are necessary to support the war may make our frugality necessary; and, as I am always preaching that doctrine, I cannot in conscience or in decency encourage the contrary, by my example, in furnishing my children with foolish modes and luxuries. I therefore send all the articles you desire, that are useful and necessary, and omit the rest; for, as you say you should "have great pride in wearing any thing I send, and showing it as your father's taste," I must avoid giving you an opportunity of doing that with either lace or feathers. If you wear your cambric ruffles as I do, and take care not to mend the holes, they will come in time to be lace; and feathers, my dear girl, may be had in America from every cock's tail.

If you happen again to see General Washington, assure

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him of my very great and sincere respect, and tell him, that all the old Generals here amuse themselves in studying the accounts of his operations, and approve highly of his conduct.

Present my affectionate regards to all friends that inquire after me, particularly Mr. Duffield and family, and write oftener, my dear child, to your loving father,

B. FRANKLIN.

1019. TO FRANCIS HOPKINSON (D. S. W.)

Passy, June 4, 1779.

DEAR FRIEND: — I received your kind Letter of the 22d October last, which gave me great Pleasure, as it informed me of your Welfare, and of your appointment to the honourable Office of Treasurer of Loans. I think the Congress judg'd rightly in their Choice, and Exactness in accounts and scrupulous fidelity in matters of Trust are Qualities for which your father was eminent, and which I was persuaded was inherited by his Son when I took the liberty of naming him one of the Executors of my Will, a Liberty which I hope you will excuse.

I am sorry for the Losses you have suffered by the Goths and Vandals,[1] but hope it will be made up to you by the good Providence of God and the Good Will of your country, to whom your Pen has occasionally been of Service.

[1] In his letter of October 22, 1779 (A. P. S.) Hopkinson wrote: "I have suffered much by the invasion of the Goths and Vandals. I was obliged to fly from my house at Borden Town with my Family & leave all my effects in *statu quo*; the Savages plundered me to their Heart's Content — but I do not repine as I really esteem it an honour to have suffered in my Country's Cause & in support of the Rights of human Nature & of Civil Society." — ED.

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I am glad the Enemy have left something of my Gimcrackery that is capable of affording you pleasure. You are therefore very welcome to the use of my Electrical and Pneumatic Machines as long as you think proper.[1]

I inclose you a little Piece or two of Oxford wit,[2] which I lately received, hoping they may afford you a few minutes' Amusement. Present my respects to your good Mother and Sisters, and believe me ever, my dear friend, your most affectionate, B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. — Permit me to recommend the new Minister, M. le Chevalier de Luzerne, to your Civilities, as a Gentleman of most amiable Character here, and a hearty friend of the American Cause. If you can in any respect be serviceable to him, you will much oblige me.

1020. TO WILLIAM GREENE[3] (D. S. W.)

Passy, June 4, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I received your kind Letter of Dec. 10, with the Bills of Exchange for Two hundred and Sixteen Dollars, with the

[1] Hopkinson had borrowed from Mr. Bache the portable electrical apparatus and a little air pump belonging to Franklin. "N. B. Your gimcracks have suffered much by the late Usurpers of our city." — ED.

[2] In reply Hopkinson wrote, September 5, 1779 (A. P. S.): "I thank you for the little Piece of Oxford Wit. . . . In return for your rocket I send you a few of my political squibs. Ammunition of this kind hath been rather scarce with us. Most of our writers have left the great field of general politics wherein they might have been of considerable service to skirmish & bush-fight in the fens & thickets of Party Disputes for which I blame them much." — ED.

[3] Governor of Rhode Island (1778–1786). Letter undated by Sparks and Bigelow. — ED.

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List of Goods you would have in return. As I live far from any SeaPort, and am unacquainted with Merchandise, I sent the Bills with your Orders directly to my Nephew at Nantes, who will, I doubt not, accomplish it to your Satisfaction. I shall be glad of any Opportunity of being serviceable to your Son-in-Law,[1] both for your Sake and his Father's.

Your Letter, with the first Set of the Bills, did not come to hand which I regret the more, as by that means I have lost Mrs. Greene's Letter, which you tell me was inclos'd. Present my affectionate Respects to her; and my Love, with that of my Grandson, to honest Ray;[2] of whose Welfare I am very glad to hear, and of his Progress in his Learning.

If my Sister continues under your hospitable Roof, let her know, that I hope to receive hers of the 7th that you mention, I have not time now to write to her, but will by the next Opportunity; and that I am well, & love her as well as ever. With great Esteem and Respect, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. If the Chevalier de la Luzerne should pass through your Government, I recommend him warmly to your Civilities. He goes over to supply the place of M. Gérard, as his Most Christian Majesty's Minister to the Congress. He is a Gentleman of a most amiable Character here, has great connections, and is a hearty friend to America.

[1] Major Samuel Ward (1756–1832), son of Samuel Ward, governor of Rhode Island. He was major of the First Rhode Island line. — ED.

[2] Ray Greene (1765–1849) was at this time preparing to enter Yale College. He became attorney-general of Rhode Island in 1794, and United States senator in 1797. — ED.

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1021. TO THE COUNCIL OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY (D. S. W.)

Passy, June 4, 1779.

HON^BLE GENTLEMEN:—The Commissioners at this Court receiv'd the Letters you did them the Honour of writing to them recommending the Marquis de la Fayette. I immediately sent it [*sic*] to be perus'd by the Ministers, who desired to have a Copy of it. He was very favourably received by his Majesty, & has had given him a Regiment of Dragoons. He retains the warmest Zeal for the American Cause and affection for the People, and has been continually moving something or other with the Ministry for the Advantage of America ever since his arrival. The Chevalier De Ramondis, too, retains the most grateful Sense of the attention paid him by your Government during his Illness under the Loss of his Arm. Several other Officers speak highly in favour of our Country on account of the Civilities they received there, which has a very Good Effect here, and evinces the Wisdom of the Conduct you are accustomed to pursue with regard to Strangers of merit. I thought it right to acquaint you with these Circumstances, and I do it with more pleasure, as it gives me an opportunity of assuring you of the great Respect with which I have the honour to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

P.S. — If the Chevalier de la Luzerne who is going to America to succeed M. Gérard as Minister from this Court, should happen to put into Boston, you will find him every way deserving of the Civilities he may receive independent

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of his public Character. He is much esteemed and respected here, has great Connections, and is a hearty Friend to the Cause of Liberty & America.

1022. TO JOHN ADAMS (M. H. S.)

Passy June 5, 1779

Sir,

The Chevalier de la Luzerne set out yesterday for L'Orient and will be with you perhaps before this comes to hand. You will find him a very agreable sensible Man, and a hearty Friend to the Cause of America.

As you may land in Boston and are not certain of going directly to Philadelphia I have put under his care my Dispatches for Congress, and request yours for those to New England.

M^r^ Bondfield[1] has drawn on me for 18000 Livres on account of the canon. I can not find the agreement that was made with him for that Article. If you have it and can easily get at it, be so good as to send it to me or a copy of it.

M^r^. Schweighauser in a late account charges a Commission of 5 per cent on the simple Delivery of two Cargoes of Tobacco out of the Ship into the hands of the officer of the Farmers General, all attendding (*sic*) Expences separately charged; and to make the Commission rise the higher he has valued the Tobacco at 90 Livres, the Price it now sells at in the Ports and not at 40 Livres which it was to be

[1] John Bondfield, merchant and United States commercial agent at Bordeaux. — Ed.

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delivered at by our Contracts; by this means the Commission on those two Cargoes comes to 630£ sterling. Thinking this an exorbitant Demand I got a Friend to inquire of the Merchants upon Change what was the custom in such Cases, and received the following Answer: "I have spoken to more than 10 Merchants, who all have told me unanimously that one percent was not only the general custom but as high as could be claimed being half Commission. For if there had been a sale in the Case, it would have been two percent which is the general Usage in the Trade and not 5 per cent." I have wrote to M^r^. Schweighauser that I objected to that article of his account, but he seems not dispos'd to give it up. I find myself too little acquainted with Mercantile Business to be a Match for these people which makes me more and more desire to see Consuls appointed in the Ports, who might take it off my hands, and I wish, if you are of Opinion it would be right, that you would press it upon Congress. My grandson desires I would present you his affectionate Respects and joins with me in heartily wishing you and our young Friends a prosperous Voyage and happy meeting with your Friends and Family.

I shall take care to present your Respects to the good Ladies you mention. All goes on well here: countenances begin to brighten, and the contrary in England (according to our last Advices) from the Apprehension of certain Events which may God prosper.

I am with great Esteem and Respect

Sir,

Your most obed^t^ and
most humble Servant
B. FRANKLIN.

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1023. TO MESSRS. J. ROCQUETTE, A. ELSEVIER, AND BROTHERS ROCQUETTE (D. S. W.)

Passy, June 13, 1779

GENTLEMEN: — I received your favour of the 7th inst.,[1] inclosing two Notes of the United States for 1000 dollars each, for my Inspection, which I return enclosed. I have not yet seen the Resolution mentioned therein, but, by what I can recollect from the face of the Notes themselves, I judge that the Dollars for which the Notes are given were of Paper-Money borrowed, and that the interest will be paid and the principal repaid in the same paper, which is now in state of great Depreciation. If before the time of Payment it should fall still Lower, the possessor of the Notes will be so much the Loser. If on the Contrary, they should rise in Value, (of which, from the Measures taken for that purpose there is great appearance), the possessor will be in proportion a Gainer; the Interest will be pay'd every year, but is payable only at the Loan Office in America from whence the Bills issued, and to that End they must be produced there, that the payment may be indorsed. These Bills have therefore been improperly brought to Europe, being of less value here, as they must return to have their Effect, and, being *Sola* Bills, payable to the Bearer, they have not the same Security from the Dangers of the Sea that Bills of Exchange usually have; for they may not only be lost or destroyed by Accidents, but, if taken, the

[1] The letter of inquiry (June 7) is in A. P. S. It was written in Rotterdam. — ED.

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Enemy will reap the benefit of them. The Insurance of them back is therefore a proportionate Diminution of their Value. At what Value they are at present current in America I cannot inform you, that depending on the fluctuating state of the Paper there; nor do I know where they can be so well negociated as in the place where they are payable.

I have the honour to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

1024. MORALS OF CHESS[1] (A. P. S.)

[PLAYING at chess is the most ancient and most universal game known among men; for its original is beyond the memory of history, and it has, for numberless ages, been the amusement of all the civilised nations of Asia, the Persians, the Indians, and the Chinese. Europe has had it above a thousand years; the Spaniards have spread it over their part of America; and it has lately begun to make its appearance in the United States. It is so interesting in itself, as not to need the view of gain to induce engaging in it; and thence it is seldom played for money. Those therefore who have leisure for such diversions, cannot find one that is more innocent: and the following piece, written with a view to correct (among a few young friends) some little

[1] The date of this "bagatelle" is fixed by a letter written to Franklin by Dr. Dubourg June 28, 1779 (A. P. S.). With this letter Dubourg returned to his "dear master" the Ms. of "The Morals of Chess," stating that he was retaining a copy of it and expected to have it published in *Le Journal de Paris*. It was published in the same year in London by C. and J. Robinson. The Ms. copy in A. P. S. is incomplete, and is in the handwriting of Dr. Dubourg. — ED.

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improprieties in the practice of it, shows at the same time that it may, in its effects on the mind, be not merely innocent, but advantageous, to the vanquished as well as the victor.]

The Game of Chess is not merely an idle Amusement. Several very valuable qualities of the Mind, useful in the course of human Life, are to be acquir'd or strengthened by it, sò as to become habits, ready on all occasions. For Life is a kind of Chess, in which we often have Points to gain, & Competitors or Adversaries to contend with; and in which there is a vast variety of good and ill Events, that are in some degree the Effects of Prudence or the want of it. By playing at Chess, then, we may learn,

I. *Foresight*, which looks a little into futurity, and considers the Consequences that may attend an action; for it is continually occurring to the Player, "If I move this piece, what will be the advantages or disadvantages of my new situation? What Use can my Adversary make of it to annoy me? What other moves can I make to support it, and to defend myself from his attacks?"

II. *Circumspection*, which surveys the whole Chessboard, or scene of action; the relations of the several pieces and situations, the Dangers they are respectively exposed to, the several possibilities of their aiding each other, the probabilities that the Adversary may make this or that move, and attack this or the other Piece, and what different Means can be used to avoid his stroke, or turn its consequences against him.

III. *Caution*, not to make our moves too hastily. This habit is best acquired, by observing strictly the laws of the

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Game; such as, *If you touch a Piece, you must move it somewhere; if you set it down, you must let it stand.* And it is therefore best that these rules should be observed, as the Game becomes thereby more the image of human Life, and particularly of War; in which, if you have incautiously put yourself into a bad and dangerous position, you cannot obtain your Enemy's Leave to withdraw your Troops, and place them more securely, but you must abide all the consequences of your rashness.

And *lastly*, we learn by Chess the habit of not being discouraged by present appearances in the state of our affairs, the habit of hoping for a favourable Change, and that of persevering in the search of resources. The Game is so full of Events, there is such a variety of turns in it, the Fortune of it is so subject to sudden Vicissitudes, and one so frequently, after long contemplation, discovers the means of extricating one's self from a supposed insurmountable Difficulty, that one is encouraged to continue the Contest to the last, in hopes of Victory from our own skill, or at least [of getting a stale mate,] from the Negligence of our Adversary. And whoever considers, what in Chess he often sees instances of, that [particular pieces of] success [$\frac{\text{is}}{\text{are}}$] apt to produce Presumption, & its consequent Inattention, by which more is afterwards lost than was gain'd by the preceding Advantage, while misfortunes produce more care and attention, by which the loss may be recovered, will learn not to be too much discouraged by any present success of his Adversary, nor to despair of final good fortune upon every little Check he receives in the pursuit of it.

That we may therefore be induced more frequently to

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chuse this beneficial amusement, in preference to others which are not attended with the same advantages, every Circumstance that may increase the pleasure of it should be regarded; and every action or word that is unfair, disrespectful, or that in any way may give uneasiness, should be avoided, as contrary to the immediate intention of both the Players, which is to pass the Time agreably.

Therefore,[1] first, if it is agreed to play according to the strict rules, then those rules are to be exactly observed by both parties, and should not be insisted on for one side, while deviated from by the other — for this is not equitable.

Secondly, if it is agreed not to observe the rules exactly, but one party demands indulgencies, he should then be as willing to allow them to the other.

Thirdly, no false move should ever be made to extricate yourself out of difficulty, or to gain an advantage. There can be no pleasure in playing with a person once detected in such unfair practice.

Fourthly, if your adversary is long in playing, you ought not to hurry him, or express any uneasiness at his delay. You should not sing, nor whistle, nor look at your watch, nor take up a book to read, nor make a tapping with your feet on the floor, or with your fingers on the table, nor do any thing that may disturb his attention. For all these things displease; and they do not show your skill in playing, but your craftiness or your rudeness.

Fifthly, you ought not to endeavour to amuse and deceive your adversary, by pretending to have made bad moves, and saying that you have now lost the game, in order to make him secure and careless, and inattentive to your

[1] What follows in the Ms. is in French. — Ed.

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schemes: for this is fraud and deceit, not skill in the game.

Sixthly, you must not, when you have gained a victory, use any triumphing or insulting expression, nor show too much pleasure; but endeavour to console your adversary, and make him less dissatisfied with himself, by every kind of civil expression that may be used with truth, such as, "you understand the game better than I, but you are a little inattentive;" or, "you play too fast;" or, "you had the best of the game, but something happened to divert your thoughts, and that turned it in my favour."

Seventhly, if you are a spectator while others play, observe the most perfect silence. For, if you give advice, you offend both parties, him against whom you give it, because it may cause the loss of his game, him in whose favour you give it, because, though it be good, and he follows it, he loses the pleasure he might have had, if you had permitted him to think until it had occurred to himself. Even after a move or moves, you must not, by replacing the pieces, show how they might have been placed better; for that displeases, and may occasion disputes and doubts about their true situation. All talking to the players lessens or diverts their attention, and is therefore unpleasing. Nor should you give the least hint to either party, by any kind of noise or motion. If you do, you are unworthy to be a spectator. If you have a mind to exercise or show your judgment, do it in playing your own game, when you have an opportunity, not in criticizing, or meddling with, or counselling the play of others.

Lastly, if the game is not to be played rigorously, according to the rules above mentioned, then moderate your

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desire of victory over your adversary, and be pleased with one over yourself. Snatch not eagerly at every advantage offered by his unskilfulness or inattention; but point out to him kindly, that by such a move he places or leaves a piece in danger and unsupported; that by another he will put his king in a perilous situation, &c. By this generous civility (so opposite to the unfairness above forbidden) you may, indeed, happen to lose the game to your opponent; but you will win what is better, his esteem, his respect, and his affection, together with the silent approbation and good-will of impartial spectators.

1025. TO ALEXANDER GILLON[1] (D. S. W.)

Passy, July 5, 1779

SIR:—I received the Honour of yours dated the 29th past.[2] The Zeal you show for the Relief of Carolina is very laudable; and I wish it was in my Power to second it by complying with your Proposition. But the little squadron[3] which you suppose to be in my disposition, is not, as you seem to imagine, fitted out at the Expence of the United States; nor have I any Authority to direct its Operations. It was from the beginning destined by the Concern'd for a particular Purpose. I have only, upon a Request that I could not refuse, lent the *Alliance* to it, hoping the Enterprise may prove more advantageous to the Common Cause than her Cruise could be alone. I suppose, too, that they are sailed

[1] Commodore of the South Carolina naval forces. [2] In A. P. S. — ED.
[3] The fleet at L'Orient. — ED.

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before this time. Your other Scheme for raising 1,800,000 livres by Subscription throughout France, to be advanced to the State of S° Carolina on an Interest of 7 percent., &c., being mixed with a Commercial Plan, is so far out of my way, and what I cannot well judge of, but in the present Circumstances I should think it not likely to succeed. However, as I am charg'd to procure a Loan for the United States at a lower Interest, I can have no hand in encouraging this particular Loan, as it interferes with the other. And I cannot but observe that the Agents from our different States running all over Europe begging to borrow Money at high Interest, has given such an Idea of our Poverty and Distress as has exceedingly hurt the general Credit, and made the Loan for the United States almost unpracticable. With great Esteem, I have the honour to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

1026. TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS (D. S. W.)

Passy, July 8, 1779

DEAR JONATHAN, I received yours of the 1st and 2d Inst. Inclos'd I send as you desire Mr. Lee's original Letter declining any farther Concern with the Accounts. As it contains some malevolent Insinuations relating to them that are groundless, I think it right you should at the same time see my Observations on them, in the Drafts of a Letter I intended to send him in Answer, but which on second thoughts I did not send, merely to avoid a continu'd Altercation, for which I had neither Time nor Inclination, and he abundance of both.

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I am much oblig'd to the Gentlemen who have undertaken the Trouble of examining your Accounts, and if they think fit to join Commodore Gillon to their Number, and he will be so good as to accept, it will be very agreable to me. I am sorry that M. Schweighauser declines it, as he was put into our Business by Messrs. Lee, and it was therefore I nam'd him in the request, tho' not an American.

I request you would make Inquiry concerning the Complaints contain'd in two Papers I inclose, which were handed to me from the Spanish Ambassador.

I suspect that some of the English Cruizers do sometimes personate Americans to create Mischief. Let me know if such Vessels really went from Nantes.

I am, your affectionate Uncle.

B. FRANKLIN.

1027. TO JOHN PAUL JONES (D. S. W.)

Passy, July 8, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I received your favours of the 2d and 4th Inst.[1] I am sorry for the Accidents, that have obliged your little Squadron to return and refit; but hope all may be for the best. Some days since, M. Chaumont handed to me the Substance of a Letter in French, which contain'd Heads of the Instructions, that M. de Sartine wish'd me to give you. I had them translated, and put into the form of a Letter to you, which I signed, and gave back to M. C., who, I suppose, has sent it to you. I have no other Orders to give; for, as the

[1] Both in A. P. S. — ED.

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Court is at the chief Expence, I think they have the best right to direct.

I observe that you write about a Change of the Destination; but, when a thing has been once considered and determin'd on in Council, they do not care to resume the Consideration of it, having much Business on hand, and there is not now time to obtain a Reconsideration. It has been hinted to me, that the Intention of ordering your Cruise to finish at the Texel, is with a view of getting out that Ship: But this should be kept a Secret.

I can say nothing about Capt. Landais' Prize.[1] I suppose the Minister has an account of it, but I have heard nothing from him about it. If he reclaims it on account of his passport, we must then consider what is to be done. I approve of the Careenage propos'd for the *Alliance*, as a thing necessary. As she is said to be a remarkable swift Sailer, I should hope you might by her means take some privateers, and a Number of Prisoners, so as to Continue the Cartel, and redeem all our Poor Countrymen. My best Wishes ever attend you. I am, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

1028. TO BARBEU DUBOURG (D. S. W.)

Passy, Aug. 13, 1779.

DEAR SIR, Having begun the affair of our Loan by the Means of our friend, M. Ferdinand Grand, banker, Rue

[1] A brigantine belonging to Dublin and bound homewards from Bordeaux with a cargo of wine and brandy. The captain had a passport signed by M. de Sartine in October, 1778, valid for one voyage only. — ED.

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Montmartre, he is in possession of all the Particulars relating to it, and can fully satisfy the Curiosity of the Person who Enquires thro' you. I need only mention, in answer to your eighth Query, that the Money borrow'd being to be laid out in France for Arms, Ammunition, Soldier's Cloathing, &c., it will not answer our purpose to take any Money but such as is current in France, and the American Paper has no Business here. Those who have brought any of it into France — except Bills of Exchange — have committed a folly in exposing their property to two Risques for nothing, as it must go back again to find its Value.

With regard to your proposition concerning your Property in America, I should be glad to assist you in it, but I do not conceive it practicable. First, because the Congress has no Lands in its Disposition; the vacant Lands are all in some or other of the particular States; they dispose of them by general Rules; and an application to them for a Deviation from those general rules in favour of a particular Person will hardly be attended to, for they will apprehend that having done it in favour of one they will be urged to do it for many, which would be attended with many great public Inconveniences.

I am ever, my dear friend, etc., etc.,

[B. F.]

1029. TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE (L. C.)

Passy, Aug. 19, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I have just now received your Favour of the 17th. I wrote to you a Day or two ago, and have little to add. You

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ask my Opinion, what Conduct the English will probably hold on this Occasion, and whether they will not rather propose a Negociation for a Peace. I have but one Rule to go by in devining of those people, which is, that whatever is prudent for them to do they will omit; and what is most imprudent to be done, they will do it. This like other general rules may sometimes have its Exceptions; but I think it will hold good for the most part, at least while the present Ministry continues, or, rather, while the present Madman has the Choice of Ministers.

You desire to know whether I am satisfied with the Ministers here? It is impossible for anybody to be more so. I see they exert themselves greatly in the common Cause, and do every thing for us that they can. We can wish for nothing more, unless our great Want of Money should make us wish for a Subsidy, to enable us to act more vigorously in expelling the enemy from their remaining Posts, and reducing Canada. But their own Expences are so great, that I cannot press such an Addition to it. I hope, however, that we shall get some Supplies of Arms and Ammunition, and perhaps, when they can be spar'd, some Ships to aid in reducing New York and Rhode Island.

At present, I know of no good Opportunity of writing to America. There are Merchant Ships continually going, but they are very uncertain Conveyances. I long to hear of your safe Arrival in England; but the Winds are adverse, and we must have Patience. With the sincerest Esteem and Respect, I am ever, &c.

B. [FRANKLIN.]

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1030. TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN BACHE [1] (P. C.)

Passy, Aug^{t} 19, 1779.

My dear Child,

Do not think that I have forgotten you, because I have been so long without writing to you. I think of you every day, and there is nothing I desire more than to see you furnish'd with good Learning, that I may return you to your Father and Mother so accomplish'd with such Knowledge & Virtue as to give them Pleasure, and enable you to become an honourable Man in your own Country. I am therefore very willing you should have a Dictionary, and all such other Books as M. de Marignac[2] or M. Cramer shall judge proper for you. Those Gentlemen are very good to you and you are I hope very thankful to them, and do everything chearfully they advise you to do; by so doing you will recommend yourself to me, and all good People as well as we will love & esteem you for your dutiful Behaviour.

Your Friends Cochran and Deane are well, Cochran gave me a Letter for you a long time since, which I mislaid, but having now found it, I send it inclos'd. The Small Pox is in that Pension, and 4 of the Scholars are dead of it. I will speak to Cochran to send you their Names. He has not yet had it. How happy it is for you that your Parents took care to have you inoculated when you were an Infant! Which puts you out of that Danger. Your Cousin is well and will write to you and send you the Por-

[1] From a transcript courteously furnished by Mr. Arthur W. Peirce, of Franklin, Mass. — Ed.

[2] His tutor in Geneva. — Ed.

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trait you desire. I heard lately from your Father and Mother who were well, as your Brother Will, & little Sister. Present my Respects to M. Cramer, & M. Marignac. I continue very well, Thanks to God; and I shall always love you very much if you continue to be a good Boy; being ever

Your affectionate Grandfather

B. F.

Let me know what you are learning, & whether you begin to draw.—

1031. TO MR. CRAMER[1]

Passy, Aug^{t} 19, 1779.

Sir,

I have deferred too long acknowledging the Receipt of your obliging Letter relating to my Grandson. Your favourable account of him gave me a great deal of Pleasure. I hope he will not fall much short of your kind Expectations. Please to accept my Thanks for your friendly & fatherly care of him, and for the Permission you are so good as to grant him of visiting in your Family, which I am sure will be a great Advantage to him. Tho' at such a Distance from me, I feel myself perfectly satisfied respecting him, esteeming it a most happy Circumstance for him and me,

[1] From a transcript in the possession of Mr. Arthur W. Peirce, of Franklin, Massachusetts. Mr. Cramer was a gentleman of Geneva with whom young Bache travelled to Switzerland, and who had a friendly supervision of his education. Mme. Cramer (née de Wenslow) wrote to Franklin May 15, 1781 (A. P. S.), giving an analysis of the character of Benjamin Franklin Bache. — Ed.

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that you are so good as to take him under your Protection, and to inspect his Education. Bills drawn upon me from time to time for the Expense of that Education will be punctually paid: But I can never fully discharge the Obligation I am under to your Goodness. With great Esteem & Respect, I am, Sir, your most obed^{t} & most humble Serv^{t}.

B. FRANKLIN.

1032. TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE (A. P. S.) (L. C.)

Passy, Aug^{t} 24, 1779.

SIR,

The Congress, sensible of your Merit towards the United States, but unable adequately to reward it, determined to present you with a Sword, as a small Mark of their grateful Acknowledgment. They directed it to be ornamented with suitable Devices. Some of the principal Actions of the War, in which you distinguished yourself by your Bravery and Conduct, are therefore represented upon it. These, with a few emblematic Figures, all admirably well executed, make its principal Value. By the help of the exquisite Artists France affords, I find it easy to express every thing but the Sense we have of your Worth and our Obligations to you. For this, Figures and even Words are found insufficient. I therefore only add, that with the most perfect Esteem and Respect, I have the honour to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. My grandson goes to Havre with the sword, and will have the honour of presenting it to you.[1]

[1] The sword was superbly ornamented with gold relief work by Liger. The receipted bill dated August 24, 1779 (A. P. S.) shows the cost to have

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1033. FROM THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE TO B. FRANKLIN[1] (A. P. S.)

At the Havre, 29th August, 1779.

Sir,

Whatever expectations might have been rais'd from the sense of past favours, the goodness of the United States for me has ever been such, that on every occasion it far surpasses any idea I could have conceiv'd. A new proof of that flattering truth, I find in the noble present which Congress have been pleased to honour me with, and which is offered in such a manner by your Excellency, as will exceed any thing but the feelings of my unbounded gratitude.

Some of the devices I can't help finding too honourable a Reward for those slight services, which, in concert with my fellow soldiers, and under the god-like American hero's orders, I had the good luck to render. The sight of these actions, where I was a witness of American Bravery and patriotic spirit, I will ever enjoy with that pleasure, which becomes a heart glowing with love for the nation, and the most ardent zeal for theyr glory and happiness. Assurances of gratitude, which I beg leave to present to your Excellency, are much unadequate to my feelings, and nothing but those sentiments may properly acknowledge your kindness towards me.

The polite manner in which Mr. [Temple] Franklin was pleas'd to deliver that inestimable sword, lays me under great obligations to him, and demands my particular thanks. With the most perfect respect, I have the honor to be,

Your Excellency's Most obedient humble Servant

Lafayette.

1034. TO CHARLES EPP[2] (D. S. W.)

Passy, Aug^t 27, 1779

Sir, I received the Letter you did me the honour to write to me, concerning your Inclination to remove to America.

been 4800 livres. Lafayette expressed his appreciation of Temple Franklin's part in the presentation by appointing him his *aide* (September, 1779). — Ed.

[1] The original letter is in A. P. S.; a copy in Franklin's hand is in P. A. E. A contemporary copy made by C. W. F. Dumas is in L. C. — Ed.

[2] Procureur at Altorff, Switzerland, who wrote to Franklin (July 12, 1779) for advice concerning his removal to America. — Ed.

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In so great a Country as is at present possess'd by the thirteen United States extending through such different Climates, and having such a variety of Soils and Situations, there is no doubt but you might, if you were there, find one to your Mind. Lands in general are cheap there, compared with the Prices in Europe. The air is good, there are good Governments, good Laws, and good People to live with. And as you would probably make a good Citizen, there is no doubt of your meeting with a Welcome among them; But since you are in easy Circumstances where you are, and there is no immediate Necessity for your Removing, I cannot advise your taking such a Voyage with a family in this time, when if taken by the Enemy, you might be subject to many Inconveniences. I have the honour to be, Sir, etc. B. FRANKLIN.

1035. TO JOHN D. SCHWEIGHAUSER (D. S. W.)

Passy, Sept. 17, 1779.

SIR, I have now before me your favours of July 31 and Aug. 19.

Your testimony with Regard to Mr. Wm. Lee is fully sufficient to remove the Suspicion of his Sharing in your Commission. I mention'd it, not as a Charge against him, but as an Excuse for you; 5 per Cent, being, as I understood, more than double of what is usual. I could wish I had nothing to do with mercantile Business, as I am not versed in it. I perceive that you have abated the Commission on the Delivery of the Tobacco to one per Cent.,

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but then that is 1 per C. paid to your Correspondent, and another 1 per C. for yourself. To me it seems that your Commission should be not on the whole Sum, but only on what you paid your Correspondent for doing the Business; otherwise we pay twice for the same service. I must submit, however, to the Custom of Merchants. It may be against me, and if it is I suppose it is founded in some Reason that at present I am unacquainted with. But if these Two Commissions are right, the article for travelling Charges, 1,024 livres, wants Explanation.

Notwithstanding what I said relating to such of your Drafts as are founded on the part of your Account I have refused none, but honoured them all.

I am satisfy'd with your Reason about the Date of your Bills. If I should be at any time so straitned for Money when in your Debt, as that a sudden Demand from you would be inconvenient to me, I will mention it to ——, and request that your bills may be drawn at one or two Usances.

The Swedish Ambassador has presented a Memorial to M. De Vergennes relating to the Prize and the demanded Damages. He mentioned that the Swedish People were beaten and cruelly treated by ours. This is so contrary to our Custom that I can hardly believe it. I must answer his memorial, and therefore wish to see again the Papers that I may examine them. I think I sent them down to you, when I desired you to get some of the Letters translated. Please to return them to me, and you shall have them again when wanted for the Trial. If you have received the Opinion of the advocate of the Bureau of Prizes, which you expected, please to send me a Copy of it.

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The two sick Persons who came over among the Prisoners from England should undoubtedly be taken care of till they are able to go home. I wish to know their Names, and the Parts of America they come from. I have no Objection to continuing the allowance to Captain Harris, supposing that he intends going by the first opportunity. Please to present my Compliments to him, and request him to inform me about a Trunk belonging to M. Louis Dupré, which was intrusted to his Care, and which is enquired after.

I thought to have had the Dispatches ready to send by Capt. Samson this Day, but there are some Points on which I must wait an answer from the Court, in order to send that answer in my Letters. This may yet require some days; but I think it will not exceed another Week.

I approve of your assisting the American Prisoners that are arrived from Lisbon, in the manner that Mr. Adams ordered for those come from England. They were, I believe, generally pretty well cloathed by Charities collected there. If any of these should be apparently in great want of cloathing, it will be well to assist them with what may be absolutely necessary in that Article.

I should think it would be right to discharge Mr. Hill, the Surgeon. I am sorry he has been kept so long. In my Opinion Surgeons should never be detain'd as Prisoners, as it is their Duty and their Practice to help the sick and wounded of either side when they happen to have an Opportunity. They should therefore be considered not as Parties in any War, but as friends to Humanity.

I request you to make enquiry by your Correspondents in the Different Ports of Spain, what English Prisoners

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brought in by the Americans were confined there. When you receive answers, please to communicate them to me.

I inclose you a Copy of what I write to Mr. Williams relating to my Orders about the Prisoners. We must not regard Reports.

I have the honour to be, with great Esteem sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

I will transmit to Congress the memoire relating to the Baron d'Autroche.

1036. TO PIERRE JEAN GEORGES CABANIS[1]

à Passy, ce 19 7^bre '79.

M^r FRANKLIN est fâché d'avoir causé le moindre tort à ces beaux cheveux, qu'il regarde toujours avec Plaisir. Si cette Dame aime à passer ses Jours avec lui, il aimerait autant à passer ses Nuits avec elle; & comme il lui a dèjà donné beaucoup de ses jours, quoique il en avait si peu de reste à donner, elle paraît ingrate de ne lui avoir jamais donné une seule de ses nuits, qui coulent continuellement en pure perte, sans faire le bonheur de personne, à l'exception de Poupon. Il l'embrasse neantmoins bien serrement, parce qu'il l'aime infiniment malgré tous ses défauts.

A Monsieur
Monsieur Cabbanis, pour être
montrée à notre Dame
d'Auteuil.

[1] From the original exhibited at the Paris Exposition of 1889. Madame Helvétius, widow of the well-known philosopher, was the centre of the little court of distinguished men, scientists and ardent friends of liberty, who were

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1037. TO PIERRE JEAN GEORGES CABANIS[1]

M. FRANKLIN étant levé, lavé, rasé, peigné, beautifié à son mieux, tout habillé & sur le point de sortir, avec sa tête pleine des 4 Mesdames Helvétius, & des doux Baisers qu'il propose de leur dérober, est bien mortifié de trouver la Possibilité de cette Félicité remise à Dimanche prochain. Il prendra autant qu'il peut de Patience, espérant de voir une de ces Dames chez M. de Chaumont le Mercredi. Il sera là à bonne heure, pour la voir entrer avec cette Grace & cette Dignité qui l'ont tant charmé il y a sept Semaines dans le même lieu. Il projette même de l'arrêter là & de la retenir chez lui pour la vie. Ses trois autres restantes à l'Auteuil peuvent suffire pour les Serins & les Abbés.

A Passy, Dimanche matin.

1038. TO COMTE DE VERGENNES (A. P. S.)

Passy, Sept 26, 1779.

SIR,

I received yesterday Evening the Letter your Excellency did me the honour of writing to me, together with the Pacquet for M. De la Luzerne, which I shall take Care to forward with my Dispatches. I could have wished it had been possible to write something positive to the Congress

Franklin's intimates during his residence at Passy. By them she was recognized as their amiable and gracious sovereign, and surnamed "Notre Dame d'Auteuil." Cabanis was at this time twenty-two years old. — ED.

[1] From the original exhibited at the Paris Exposition of 1889. Date uncertain, but probably September, 1779. — ED.

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by this Opportunity, on the Subject of the Supplies they have asked, because I apprehend great Inconveniences may arise from their being left in a State of Uncertainty on that Account, not only as the Hope or Expectation of obtaining those Supplies may prevent their taking other Measures, if possible, to obtain them, but as the Disappointment will give great Advantage to their Enemies, external and internal. Your Excellency will be so good as to excuse my making this Observation, which is forced from me by my great Anxiety on the Occasion. With the greatest respect, I am, your Excellency's most obedient & most humble Servant, . B. FRANKLIN.

1039. TO JONATHAN NESBITT[1] (D. S. W.)

Passy, September 29. 1779

SIR, Captain Conyngham has not been neglected.[2] As soon as I heard of his arrival in England, I wrote to a friend to furnish him with what money he might want, and to assure him that he had never acted without a Commission. I have been made to understand in answer that there is not intention to prosecute him, and that he was accordingly removed from Pendennis Castle and put among the common Prisoners at Plymouth, to take his Turn for Exchange. The Congress, hearing of the Threats to sacrifice him, put three Officers in close Confinement to abide his fate, and acquainted Sir George Collier with their Determination who probably wrote to the British Ministers. I thank you

[1] A banker at L'Orient. — ED.

[2] See Franklin to Captain Conyngham Nov. 22, 1779. — ED.

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for informing me what became of his first Commission.[1] I suppose I can now easily recover it to produce on Occasion. Probably the Date of that taken with him being posterior to his Capture of the pacquet, made the Enemy think they had an Advantage against him. But when the English Government have encouraged our Sailors intrusted with our Vessels to betray that Trust, run away with the Vessels, and bring them into English Ports, giving such Traitors the Value, as if good and lawful Prizes, it was foolish Imprudence in the British Commodore to talk of hanging one of our Captains for taking a Prize without Commission.

I have the honour to be, with great esteem, sir,

B. FRANKLIN.

1040. TO JAMES LOVELL (D. S. W.)

Passy, September 30, 1779.

SIR,

I have within these few Days received a Number of Dispatches from you which have arrived by the *Mercury* and other Vessels. Hearing but this instant of an Opportunity from Bordeaux, & that the Courier sets out from Versailles at 5 this Evening, I embrace it just to let you know, that I have delivered the Letters from Congress to the King, and have laid the Invoices of Supplies desired (with a Translation) before the Ministers and, tho' I have not yet receiv'd a positive Answer, I have good reason to believe I shall obtain most of them, if not all. But, as this Demand will cost the Court a vast sum, and their Expences in the War

[1] It was taken from him in Dunkirk after he was put in prison, and sent up to Paris. Nesbitt believed it to be "lodged in the hands of Mon^{s} le Comte de Vergennes." — ED.

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are prodigious I beg I may not be put under the Necessity by occasional Drafts on me, of asking for more money than is required to pay your Bills for Interest. I must protest those I have advice of from Martinique and New Orleans, (even if they were drawn by permission of Congress,) for want of money; and I wish the Committee of Commerce would caution their Correspondents not to embarrass me with their Bills.

I put into my Pocket nothing of the allowance Congress has been pleas'd to make me. I shall pay it all in honouring their Drafts and supporting their Credit; but do not let me be burthened with supporting the Credit of every one, who has Claims in the Board of Commerce, or the Navy. I shall write fully by the *Mercury*. I send you some of the latest Newspapers, and have the honour to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

1041. TO ARTHUR LEE (D. S. W.)

Passy, September, 30, 1779.

SIR, I received but yesterday morning, just as I was going out of Town, the Letter you did me the honour of writing me, dated the 26th Instant respecting my supplying you with Money for your support in Spain. As I cannot furnish the Expence, and there is not, in my Opinion, any Likelihood at Present of your being received at that Court, I think your Resolution of returning forthwith to America is both wise and honest.

With great Respect, I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

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1042. TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE (D. S. W.)

Passy, October 1, 1779.

DEAR SIR, It is a long time since I did myself the honour of writing to you, but I have frequently had the Pleasure of hearing of your Welfare.

Your kindness to my Grandson in offering to take him under your Wing in the Expedition is exceedingly obliging to me. Had the Expedition gone on, it would have been an infinite advantage to him to have been present with you so early in Life at Transactions of such vast Importance to great Nations. I flatter myself, too, that he might possibly catch from you some Tincture of those engaging Manners that make you so much the Delight of all that know you. Accept, however, my warmest and most grateful acknowledgments.

I send you enclosed a Newspaper containing the Particulars of Wayne's gallant attack of Stony Point. This is good News. But it is follow'd by some bad: the Loss of our little Squadron from Boston at Penobscot, which it is said our people were obliged to blow up. I hope Count d'Estaign's Arrival in America will give us our Revenge. Six thousand Troops are ordered to the West Indies to secure your Conquests, and I hope, make more. But I do not hear of any Intention to send any to our Country. I have no Orders to request Troops, but large ones for Supplies, and I dare not take any farther Steps than I have done in such a Proposition without Orders. Accept in Behalf of the Congress my thankful Acknowledgments for your Zeal

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to serve America. Occasions may offer which at present do not appear, wherein your Bravery & Conduct may be highly useful to her.

May every felicity attend you, is the wish of, dear Sir, your affectionate and most obedient Servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

1043. TO EDWARD BRIDGEN (L. C.)

Passy, Octo^{r} 2^{d} 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I received your Favor of the 17th past,[1] and the two Samples of Copper are since come to hand. The Metal seems to be very good, and the price reasonable; but I have not yet received the Orders necessary to justify my making the Purchase proposed. There has indeed been an intention to strike Copper Coin, that may not only be useful as small Change, but serve other purposes.

Instead of repeating continually upon every halfpenny the dull story that everybody knows, (and what it would have been no loss to mankind if nobody had ever known,) that Geo. III is King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, &c. &c., to put on one side, some important Proverb of Solomon, some pious moral, prudential or economical Precept, the frequent Inculcation of which, by seeing it every time one receives a piece of Money, might make an impression upon the mind, especially of young Persons, and tend to regulate the Conduct; such as, on some, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom;* on others, *Honesty is the best Policy;* on others, *He that by the Plow would thrive, himself must*

[1] In A. P. S. — ED.

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either hold or drive; on others, *Keep thy Shop, and thy Shop will keep thee;* on others, *A penny saved is a penny got;* on others, *He that buys what he has no need of, will soon be forced to sell his necessaries;* on others, *Early to bed and early to rise, will make a man healthy, wealthy, and wise;* and so on, to a great variety.

The other side it was proposed to fill with good Designs, drawn and engraved by the best artists in France, of all the different Species of Barbarity with which the English have carried on the War in America, expressing every abominable circumstance of their Cruelty and Inhumanity, that figures can express, to make an Impression on the minds of Posterity as strong and durable as that on the Copper. This Resolution has been a long time forborne; but the late burning of defenceless Towns in Connecticut, on the flimsy pretence that the people fired from behind their Houses, when it is known to have been premeditated and ordered from England, will probably give the finishing provocation, and may occasion a vast demand for your Metal.

I thank you for your kind wishes respecting my Health. I return them most cordially fourfold into your own bosom. Adieu.

B. FRANKLIN.

1044. TO JOHN JAY[1] (L. C.)

Passy, Oct 4 1779.

SIR,

I received the Letter your Excell[y] did me the honour to write to me of the [30] of June last, inclosing Acts of Congress

[1] This letter was addressed to John Jay as President of Congress, but he had, at this date, been succeeded by Huntington. — ED.

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respecting Bills of exch. for 2,400,000 Livres tournois, drawn on me in favour of M. de Beaumarchais.[1] The Bills have not yet appeared, but I shall accept them when they do, relying on the Care of Congress to enable me to pay them. As to the Accounts of that Gentleman, neither the Commissioners, when we were all together, nor myself since, have ever been able to obtain a Sight of them, though repeatedly promis'd; and I begin to give over all Expectation of them. Indeed, if I had them, I should not be able to do much with them, or to controvert any thing I might doubt in them, being unacquainted with the Transactions and Agreements on which they must be founded, and having small Skill in Accounts. Mr. Ross and Mr. Williams, pressing me to examine and settle theirs, I have been obliged to request indifferent Persons, expert in such Business, to do it for me, subject to the Revision of Congress; and I could wish that my Time and Attention were not taken up by any Concerns in mercantile Affairs, and thereby diverted from others more important.

The Letters of Congress to the King were very graciously receiv'd. I have earnestly press'd the Supplies desir'd, and the Ministers (who are extreamly well dispos'd towards us) are now actually studying the Means of furnishing them. The Assistance of Spain is hop'd for. We expect to hear from thence in a few days. The Quantity is great, and will cost a vast Sum. I have this Day accepted three of your Drafts, part of the 360,000 Livres, drawn for on the 9th of June; but, when I ask for Money to pay them, I must mention, that, as they were drawn to purchase Military Stores, an Abatement, equal to the Value, may be made of the

[1] Original letter (June 30) in A. P. S. — Ed.

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Quantity demanded from hence; for I am really asham'd to be always worrying the Ministers for more Money. And, as to the private Loans expected, I wrote in a former letter, that our public Credit was not yet sufficiently established, and that the Loan in Holland had not exceeded 80,000 Florins, to which there has since been no Addition.

A Mr. Neufville [1] came from thence to me last Spring, proposing to procure great Sums, if he might be employ'd for that purpose, and the Business taken away from the House that had commenc'd it. His Terms at first were very extravagant, such as that all the Estates real and personal in the 13 Provinces should be mortgaged to him; that a fifth part of the Capital Sum borrowed should every year, for 5 years, be laid out in Commodities, and sent to Holland, consign'd to him, to remain in his hands till the term (10 years) stipulated for final Payment was compleated, as a Security for the Punctuality of it, when he was to draw the usual Commissions; that all Vessels or Merchandize coming from America to Europe should be consign'd to him or his Correspondents, &c. &c. As I rejected these with some Indignation, he came down to the more reasonable ones of doing the Business as it was done by the other House, who, he said, could do no more, being destitute of the Interest which he possess'd.

I did not care abruptly to change a House, that had in other respects been very friendly and serviceable to us, and thereby throw a slur upon their Credit, without a Certainty of mending our Affairs by it, and therefore told Mr. Neufville, that, if he could procure and show me a List of Subscribers, amounting to the Sum he mentioned, or near it, I would

[1] Jean de Neufville, merchant of Amsterdam. — Ed.

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comply with his Proposition. This he readily and confidently undertook to do. But, after three Months, during which he acquainted me from time to time, that the favourable Moment was not yet come, I received, instead of the Subscription, a new Set of Propositions, among the terms of which were an additional *one per cent*, and a patent from Congress, appointing him and his sons "*Commissioners for Trade and Navigation, and Treasurers of the General Congress and of every private State of the Thirteen United States of North America, through the Seven United Provinces*," with other Extravagancies; which I mention, that it may be understood why I have dropped a Correspondence on this Subject with a Man, who seem'd to me a vain Promiser, extreamly self-interested, and aiming chiefly to make an Appearance without Solidity, and who I understand intends applying directly to Congress, some of his Friends censuring me as neglecting the publick Interest in not coming into his Measures.

The truth is, I have no expectations from Holland, while Interest received there from other Nations is so high, and our Credit there so low; while particular American States offer higher Interest than the Congress, and even our Offering to raise our Interest tends to sink our Credit. My sole Dependence now is upon this Court. I think reasonable Assistance may be obtain'd here, but I wish I may not be obliged to fatigue it too much with my applications, lest it should grow tired of the connection.

Mr. Ross has lately demanded of me near £20,000 Sterling, due to him from the Committee of Commerce, but I have been oblig'd to refuse him, as well as an application made last week by Mr. Izard for more money, tho' he has already had 2500 guineas, and another from Mr. Arthur Lee, tho'

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he has had 500 Guineas since the News of his being out of this Commission.[1] He writes me, that he will return to America forthwith, if I do not undertake to supply his Expences. As I see no likelihood of his being received at Madrid, I could not but approve his Resolution.

We had reason to expect some great Events from the Action of the Fleets this Summer in the Channel; but they are all now in Port, without having effected any thing. The Junction was late; and the length of time the Brest Squadron was at sea, equal to an East India voyage, partly on the hot Spanish Coast, occasion'd a Sickness among the People, that made their Return necessary; they had chas'd the English Fleet, which refus'd the Combat. The sick Men are recovering fast since they were landed: And the proposed Descent on England does not yet seem to be quite given up, as the troops are not withdrawn from the Ports.

Holland has not yet granted the Succours required by the English, nor even given an Answer to the Requisition presented by Sir Joseph York. The Aids will be refused; and, as the Refusal must be disagreable, it is postponed from time to time. The Expectations of Assistance from Russia and Prussia seem also to have fail'd the English; and they are as much at a Loss to find effective Friends in Europe, as they have been in America.

Portugal seems to have a better disposition towards us than heretofore. About 30 of our People, taken and set ashore on one of her Islands by the English, were maintained comfortably by the Governor during their stay there, furnish'd with every Necessary, and sent to Lisbon, where,

[1] See "Diplomatic Correspondence" (Sparks), Vol. II, pp. 246, 262, 268, 272. — S.

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on Enquiring to whom Payment was to be made for the Expence they had occasion'd, they were told, that no Reimbursement was expected, that it was the Queen's Bounty, who had a Pleasure in showing Hospitality to Strangers in Distress. I have presented Thanks, by the Portuguese Ambassador here in Behalf of the Congress; and I am given to understand, that probably in a little time the Ports of that Nation will be open to us, as those of Spain. What relates to Spain, I suppose Mr. Lee informs you of.

The Sword ordered by Congress for the Marquis de la Fayette being at length finished, I sent it down to him at Havre, where he was with the Troops intended for the Invasion. I wrote a Letter with it, and received an Answer, Copies of which I enclose, together with a Description of the Sword, and Drawings of the Work upon it, which was executed by the best Artists in Paris, and cost altogether 200 guineas. The Present has given him great Pleasure, and some of the Circumstances have been agreable to the nation.

Our Cartel goes on, a second Cargo of American Prisoners, 119 in Number, being arrived and exchanged. Our Privateers have dismiss'd a great Number at Sea, taking their written Paroles to be given up in Exchange for so many of our People in their Gaols. This is not yet quite agreed to on the other side; but some Expectations are given me, that it may take place. Certainly, Humanity would find its Account in the Practice of exchanging upon Parole; as all the Horrors of Imprisonment, with the Loss of Time and Health, might be prevented by it.

We continue to insult the Coasts of these *Lords of the Ocean* with our little Cruisers. A small Cutter, which was

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fitted out as a Privateer at Dunkirk, called the *Black Prince*, Capt. Stephen Manhant, a native of Boston, has taken, ransomed, burnt, and destroyed above 30 Sail of their Vessels within these 3 Months. The Owners are about to give her a Consort, called the *Black Princess*, for whom they ask a Commission. The Prisoners brought in serve to exchange our Countrymen, which makes me more willing to encourage such Armaments, tho' they occasion a good deal of Trouble. Captain, now Commodore Jones, put to Sea this Summer with a little Squadron, consisting of a Ship of 40 guns, the *Alliance*, another Frigate of 20, with some armed Cutters; all under American Colours, with Congress Commissions and manned in part with exchang'd Prisoners. He has sent in several Prizes, has greatly alarmed the coasts of Ireland and Scotland, and we just now hear, that, going North about, he fell in with a Number of Ships from the Baltic, convoy'd by a Fifty-Gun Ship and a 24-Gun Frigate, both of which he took, after an obstinate Engagement, and forced several of the others ashore. This News is believ'd, but we wait the Confirmation and the Particulars.

The blank Commissions remaining, of those sent to us here, are all signed by Mr. Hancock, which occasions some Difficulty. If Congress approves of my continuing to issue Commissions, I wish to have a fresh Supply, with the other necessary Papers, Instructions, Rules, Bonds, &c., of which none are now left.

M. le Comte de Maillebois, esteemed one of the best Generals in this Country, and who loves our Cause, has given me a Memorial, containing a Project for raising a Corps here for your Service, which I promis'd to lay before Congress, and accordingly I enclose a Copy. I know nothing

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of the Sentiments of Congress on the Subject of introducing Foreign Troops among us, and therefore could give no Expectation that the Plan would be adopted. It will, however, be a Pleasure to him to know, that his Good Will to serve them has been acceptable to the Congress.

A Major Borre, who has been in America, and some other Officers who have quitted our Service in Disgust, endeavour to give an Idea, that our Nation do not love the French. I take all Occasions to place in View the Regard shown by Congress to good French Officers, as a Proof that the Slight these Gentlemen complain of is particular to themselves, and probably the effect of their own Misbehaviour. I wish for the future, when any of these Sort of People leave our Armies to come home, some little Sketch of their Conduct or Character may be sent me, with the real Causes of their Resigning or Departure, that I may be the more able to justify our Country.

Here are return'd in the last Cartel a number of French Sailors, who had engaged with Captain Cunningham, were taken in coming home with one of his Prizes, and have been near two Years in English Prisons. They demand their Wages and Share of Prize Money. I send their Claim, as taken before the Officers of the Classes at Dunkerque. I know nothing of the agreement, they alledge was made with them. Mr. Hodge perhaps can settle the Affair, so that they may have Justice done them. This sort of things give me a great deal of Trouble. Several of those Men have made personal Applications to me, and I must hear all their Stories, tho' I cannot redress them. I inclose also the Claim of two Gunners, upon a Prize made by the *Boston*, Captain Tucker. I am persuaded the Congress wish to see Justice done to the

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meanest Stranger that has serv'd them. It is Justice that establisheth a Nation.

The Spanish Ambassador here has delivered me several Complaints against our Cruisers. I imagine, that all the Injuries complain'd of are not justly chargeable to us, some of the smaller English Cruisers having pillag'd Spanish vessels under American Colours, of which we have Proof upon Oath; and also, that no such American Privateers, as are said to have committed these Robberies after coming out of Nantes, have ever been known there, or in any other Port of France, or even to have ever existed. But, if any of the Complaints are well founded, I have assured the Ambassador that the Guilty will be punished, and Reparation made.

The Swedish Ambassador also complains of the Taking a ship of his Nation by Capt. Landais, the Master of which lays his Damages at 60,000 livres. I understand it was his own Fault that he was stopt, as he did not show his Papers. Perhaps this, if proved, may enable us to avoid the Damages.

Since writing the above, I have receiv'd the following further particulars of the Action between Commodore Jones and the English Men-of-War. The 44-Gun Ship is new, having been but 6 Months off the stocks; she is called the *Seraphis;* the other of 20 Guns is the *Countess of Scarborough.* He had before taken a Number of valuable Prizes, particularly a rich Ship bound to Quebec, which we suppose he may have sent to America. The English, from mistaken Intelligence, imagining he had a Body of Troops with him to make Descents, have had all their Northern Coasts alarmed, and have been put to very Expensive Movements of Troops, &c.

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The extravagant Luxury of our Country, in the midst of all its Distresses, is to me amazing. When the Difficulties are so great to find Remittances to pay for the Arms and Ammunition necessary for our Defence, I am astonish'd and vex'd to find upon Enquiry, that much the greatest Part of the Congress Interest Bills come to pay for Tea, and a great Part of the Remainder is ordered to be laid out in Gewgaws and Superfluities. It makes me grudge the Trouble of examining, and entering, and accepting them, which indeed takes a great deal of Time.

I yesterday learned from M. de Monthieu, that every thing necessary for equipping two Frigates, of 36 Guns each, such as Sailcloth, Cordage, Anchors, &c. &c., which we sent to the Congress from hence two years since, remains stored in the Warehouses of his Correspondent, Mr. Carrabas, at Cape François, having never been called for. Probably by the miscarriage of Letters, the Navy Board never heard of those Goods being there. I shall, nevertheless, leave the Application I have lately made for Materials for a Frigate of 36 Guns to take its Course. But I send you herewith Copies of two Invoices of the Cargo of the *Thérèse*, one of which is what was sent by us, the other by M. de Beaumarchais, to the end that Enquiry may be made after the whole.

On this Occasion give me leave to remark, that, of all the vast Quantities of Goods we have sent you by many different Vessels since my being in France, we never were happy enough to receive the least Scrip of Acknowledgment that they had ever come to hand, except from Mr. Langdon, of a Cargo arrived at Portsmouth, and I think of one more. This is doubtless owing to the Interruption Correspondence

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has met with, and not altogether to Neglect. But, as such Advices of Receipt may be made in short Letters, it would be well to send more Copies. The following is a matter of less Importance. It is two Years, I believe, since I sent the Monument of Gen. Montgomery. I have heard that the Vessel arriv'd in North Carolina, but nothing more. I should be glad to know of its coming to hand, and whether it is approved. Here it was admired for the Goodness and Beauty of the Marble, and the elegant Simplicity of the Design. The Sculptor has had an Engraving made of it, of which I enclose a Copy. It was contriv'd to be affix'd to the Wall within some Church, or in the great Room where the Congress meet. Directions for putting it up went with it. All the Parts were well packed in strong Cases.[1] With the greatest respect, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

P.S. *Oct.* 28. I kept the Packet in hopes of sending a more explicit Account of what might be expected in regard to the Supplies. The Express, which was daily look'd for from Spain, when I began this Letter, arrived but a few days since. I am now informed, that Court is understood to be in Treaty with the Congress in America, to furnish a Sum of hard Money there, and, on that Account, excuses itself from sharing in the Expence of furnishing these Supplies. This has a little derang'd the Measures intended to be taken here, and I am now told, that the whole Quantity of Goods demanded can hardly be furnished, but that, as soon as the Court returns from Marli, the Ministers will consult, and do the best they can for us. The arms, I hear, are in hand

[1] This monument is erected in the front of St. Paul's Church, in New York. — ED.

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at Charleville. I am unwilling to keep the Packet any longer, lest she should arrive on our Coasts too far in the Winter, and be blown off. I therefore send away the Dispatches; but, if I have the Result of the Council in time to reach her by the post, I will send it in a separate Letter. The hearty Good Will of the Ministry may be depended on; but it must be remembred, that their present Expences are enormous.

1045. TO MRS. ELIZABETH PARTRIDGE[1] (U. OF P.)

Passy, Oct. 11. 1779.

MRS. PARTRIDGE

Your kind Letter, my dear Friend, was long in coming; but it gave me the Pleasure of knowing that you had been well in October and January last. The Difficulty, Delay & Interruption of Correspondence with those I love, is one of the great Inconveniencies I find in living so far from home: but we must bear these & more, with Patience, if we can; if not, we must bear them as I do with Impatience.

You mention the Kindness of the French Ladies to me. I must explain that matter. This is the civilest nation upon Earth. Your first Acquaintances endeavour to find out what you like, and they tell others. If 'tis understood that you like Mutton, dine where you will you find Mutton. Somebody, it seems, gave it out that I lov'd Ladies; and then every body presented me their Ladies (or the Ladies presented themselves) to be *embrac'd*, that is to have their Necks kiss'd. For as to kissing of Lips or Cheeks it is not

[1] Elizabeth ("Betsey") Hubbard, a niece of Franklin, married Captain Patridge or Partridge, Superintendent of the almshouse in Boston. — ED.

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the Mode here, the first, is reckon'd rude, & the other may rub off the Paint. The French Ladies have however 1000 other ways of rendering themselves agreable; by their various Attentions and Civilities, & their sensible Conversation. 'Tis a delightful People to live with.

I thank you for the Boston Newspapers, tho' I see nothing so clearly in them as that your Printers do indeed want new Letters. They perfectly blind me in endeavouring to read them. If you should ever have any Secrets that you wish to be well kept, get them printed in those Papers. You enquire if Printers Types may be had here? Of all Sorts, very good, cheaper than in England, and of harder Metal. — I will see any Orders executed in that way that any of your Friends may think fit to send. They will doubtless send Money with their Orders. Very good Printing Ink is likewise to be had here. I cannot by this opportunity send the miniature you desire, but I send you a little Head in China, more like, perhaps, than the Painting would be. It may be set in a Locket, if you like it, cover'd with Glass, and may serve for the present. When Peace comes we may afford to be more extravagant. I send with it a Couple of Fatherly Kisses for you & your amiable Daughter, the whole wrapt up together in Cotton to be kept warm.

Present my respectful Compliments to Mr Partridge.

Adieu, my dear Child, & believe me ever

Your affectionate Papah

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1046. TO JOHN PAUL JONES[1] (L. C.)

Passy, Oct. 15, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I received the Account of your Cruize and Engagement with the *Serapis*, which you did me the honour to send me from the Texel. I have since received your Favor of the 8th, from Amsterdam. For some Days after the Arrival of your Express, scarce any thing was talked of at Paris and Versailles, but your cool Conduct and persevering Bravery during that terrible Conflict. You may believe, that the Impression on my Mind was not less strong than on that of others; but I do not chuse to say in a letter to yourself all I think on such an Occasion.

The Ministry are much dissatisfied with Captain Landais, and M. de Sartine has signified to me in writing that it is expected that I should send for him to Paris, and call him to Account for his Conduct particularly for deferring so long his coming to your Assistance, by which Means, it is supposed, the States lost some of their valuable Citizens, and the King lost many of his Subjects, Volunteers in your Ship, together with the Ship itself.

I have, accordingly, written to him this Day, acquainting him that he is charged with Disobedience of Orders in the Cruize, and Neglect of his Duty in the Engagement; that, a Court-Martial being at this Time inconvenient, if not impracticable, I would give him an earlier Opportunity of

[1] This letter is in the Jones Papers (L. C.) endorsed: "A true copy taken at L'Orient in August 1780,
Joseph Wharton Junior." — ED.

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offering what he has to say in his Justification, and for that Purpose direct him to render himself immediately here, bringing with him such Papers or Testimonies, as he may think useful in his Defence. I know not whether he will obey my orders, nor what the Ministry will do with him, if he comes; but I suspect that they may by some of their concise Operations save the Trouble of a Court-Martial. It will be well, however, for you to furnish me with what you may judge proper to support the Charges against him, that I may be able to give a just and clear Account of the Affair to Congress. In the mean time it will be necessary, if he should refuse to come, that you should put him under an Arrest, and in that Case, as well as if he comes, that you should either appoint some Person to command his Ship or take it upon yourself; for I know of no Person to recommend to you as fit for that Station.

I am uneasy about your Prisoners; I wish they were safe in France.[1] You will then have compleated the glorious work of giving Liberty to all the Americans that have so long languished for it in the British Prisons; for there are not so many there, as you have now taken.

I have the Pleasure to inform you, that the two Prizes sent to Norway are safely arrived at Berghen. With the highest Esteem, I am, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

P.S. I am sorry for your Misunderstanding with M. de C[haumont], who has a great Regard for you.

[1] The number of prisoners was five hundred and four. — S.

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1047. TO CAPTAIN PETER LANDAIS (D. S. W.)

Passy Oct. 15, 1779

SIR, I received the Letter you did me the honour of writing me, the 4th Instant,[1] with an Abstract of your journal. I thank you for your Care in sending it so early, and I congratulate you on the Success of your Cruize.

But I am sorry to find there are Charges against you for disobedience of orders, and also that the ministry here think the great loss among the king's subjects, viz., the French Volunteers on board the *Bon Homme Richard*, was owing to your not coming up sooner to her assistance, as it is supposed you might have done. M. de Sartine has in consequence written to me that it is expected I should cause an immediate Enquiry to be made into your Conduct. A Court-martial is the regular way, if you choose it: But as that may occasion a long Discussion, and be in many respects at this time inconvenient to the Service, I have (with the advice, too, of your friend M. de Chaumont) thought it better to give you an opportunity of justifying yourself, both to the Ministry and to me, coming directly to Paris, which I do hereby accordingly desire (or, to use a stronger Expression, as you may think such necessary to justify your leaving your ship, I do require) that you render yourself here as soon as possible. I need not advise you to bring with you such papers and testimonies as you may think proper for your Justification, and will only add that you

[1] In A. P. S. — ED.

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may be sure of finding in me every disposition to do that justice of your Character which it shall appear to merit.

I have the honour to be, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

1048. TO THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE NAVY FOR THE EASTERN DEPARTMENT, BOSTON

(D. S. W.)

Passy, October 17, 1779.

GENTLEMEN, I received the Letters you did me the honour of writing to me the 30th of July and 18th of August last, by the *Mercury* Packet-Boat and by a French Cutter, the other Dispatches Capt. Samson was entrusted with, came all safe to hand; and I should have dispatched him sooner if I had not found it necessary to detain him in order to send by him to Congress some Advices of Importance which could not be sooner obtained.

The Cruise of our little American Squadron, under Commodore Jones, intended partly to intercept the Baltic Trade, has had some Success, tho' not all that was hoped for. The Coasts of Britain and Ireland have been greatly alarmed, apprehending Descents, it being supposed that he had land forces with him. This has put the Enemy to much Expence in marching Troops from place to place. Several valuable Prizes have been made of Merchant-Ships, particularly two, one from London 300 Tons and 84 men, with 22 Guns, laden with naval Stores for Quebec; the other from Liverpool bound to New York and Jamaica, of 22 Guns and 87 men, laden with provisions and Bale Goods. These two

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are safely arrived at Bergen, in Norway; two smaller Prizes are arrived in France, and a Number of Colliers have been burnt or ransomed. The Baltic fleet was met with, and the two Men-of-War who convoyed them, viz., the *Serapis*, a new ship of 44 Guns, and the *Countess of Scarborough*, of 20 Guns are taken after a long and bloody engagement, and are brought into the Texel. But the merchant-Ships escaped during the conflict, for which the *Alliance* and one of the other Ships are blamed, whether justly or not may be enquired into. Our Commodore's ship was so shatter'd that she could not be kept afloat, and the People being all taken out of her, she sank the Second Day after the Engagement. The rest of the Squadron are refitting in the Texel, from which neutral Place they will be obliged soon to depart with their prizes and Prisoners, near 400. I wish they may arrive safe in France, for I suppose the English will endeavour to intercept them. Jones's Bravery and Conduct in the Action has gain'd him great honour.

I condole with you on the Loss of our Armament against Penobscot, but I suppose the Sugar Ships since taken and brought into your Port have more than compensated the Expence, tho' not the disappointment of the well intended Expedition. The Congress write for Naval Stores. I have acquainted them that I have lately been informed that Stores for fitting out two 36 Gun frigates, which we bought here and sent out two Years ago are still lying in the Warehouses of M. Carrabas, at Cape François, having been forgotten there or never sent for. Perhaps you may obtain them. The Quebec Ship, if we can get her safe home, will afford large supply.

I am much oblig'd to you for the Newspapers. I shall

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direct M^r. Schweighauser to send you an account of the advances made to the officers of the *Alliance*, if he has not already done it.

With great Respect, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

1049. TO JAMES LOVELL (U. OF P.) (L. C.)

Passy, Oct 17, 1779.

SIR,

The foregoing is a Copy of my last. I have now before me your several Favours therein mentioned, viz. of June 13, July 9 and 16, and Aug. 6. I received the Journals of Congress from January 1 to June 12, which you took care to send me: But the vols. 1. & 2. which you mention^d, are not yet come to hand. I hear they are at Madrid. I know not how they came there, nor how well to get them from thence. Perhaps you can easier send me another Set.

As I hear of the arrival of the Chev^r de la Luzerne, by whom I wrote a long Letter to your Committee, I presume you have received it, and that it is not necessary to send more Copies. By this Opportunity I write largely to the President. You ask, "Will no one, under a Commission from the United States,"[1] &c. Inclosed I send you a Copy of the Instructions I gave to Commodore Jones, when it was intended to send with him some Transports and Troops to make Descents in England. Had not the Scheme been altered by the general

[1] Lovell asked (July 16, 1779), "Will no one under a Commission from these United States retaliate on the Coasts of England for the Burning of our beautiful Fairfield?" — ED.

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one of a grand Invasion, I know he would have endeavoured to put some considerable Towns to a high Ransom, or have burnt them. He sail'd without the Troops, but he nevertheless would have attempted Leith, and went into the Firth of Edinburgh with that Intention, but a sudden hard gale of Wind forc'd him out again. The late Provocations by the Burning of Fairfield and other Towns, added to the preceding, have at length demolish'd all my Moderation; and, were such another Expedition to be concerted, I think so much of that Disposition would not appear in the Instructions. But I see so many Inconveniencies in mixing the two Nations together, that I cannot encourage any farther Proposal of the kind. This has ended better than I expected; and yet a mortal Difference has arisen between Captains Jones and Landais, that makes me very uneasy about the Consequences. I send you the Journal of the Cruise.

I am glad to understand, that Congress will appoint some Person here to audit our Accounts. Mine will give but little Trouble, and I wish much to have them settled. And, for the future, I hope I shall have none to settle but what relate to my Expences.

The Quarrel you mention, between Mr. Deane and Mr. Lee, I have never meddled with, and have no Intention to take any Part in it whatever. I had and still have a very good opinion of Mr. Deane, for his Zeal and Activity in the Service of his Country; I also thought him a man of Integrity. But if he has embezzled publick Money, or traded with it on his private Account, or employ'd it in Stockjobbing, all which I understand he is charg'd with, I give him up. As yet, I think him innocent. But he and his Accusers

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are able to plead their own Causes, and Time will show what we ought to think of them.[1]

I send you with this, a Piece written by a learned Friend of mine on the Taxation of Free States, which I imagine may give you some Pleasure. Also a late Royal Edict, for abolishing the Remains of Slavery in this Kingdom. Who would have thought, a few years since, that we should live to see a king of France giving freedom to Slaves, while a king of England is endeavouring to make Slaves of Freemen.

There is much Talk all over Europe of an approaching Peace by the mediation of Russia and Holland. I have no Information of it to be depended on, and believe we ought to lay our Account on another Campaign, for which I hope you will receive in time the Supplies demanded. Nothing is wanting on my Part to forward them: And I have the satisfaction to assure you, that I do not find the Regard of this Court for the Congress and its Servants in any respect

[1] Lovell defended Lee against the charges made by Deane. He wrote to Franklin (Aug. 6, 1779): "You will long ere now have seen the Use which has been made of my letter to you respecting Mr. Deane's Recall. I at least made a Show of a Disposition to befriend him. I really had such a Disposition: and, early on his arrival, let him know what had grounded that Proceeding of Congress in hope that he would not be driven by a false Jealousy which he discovered so as to suffer Wreck upon the Quicksands of Indiscretion. All my Aim was in vain. He has been borne head long. His Publication of Dec^{r} 5 has in my opinion, totally ruined his claims to any public trust on the ground of his Stability in Affaires. And, however you may not discover the great Malignity of his Innuendoes, you cannot but see & own that his Peice contains downright lies, which must be pointed out to the Public, who have not yet your good Grounds for Conviction. There is not a single Circumstance which is mentioned against M Lee that is supported except his not having the Confidence of the french Court. The Ministers must have been Angels of Light not to have conceived Prejudices in Consequence of the indefatigable Arts of one who thought himself 'saddled' when a Colleague of Sense Honor and Integrity was given to him by Congress." (A. P. S.) — Ed.

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diminished. We have just heard from Norway, that two of the most valuable Prizes taken by the *Alliance*, Captain Landais, in the Squadron of Commodore Jones, are safe arrived at Bergen, viz. the Ship from London to Quebec, laden with Naval Stores, and that from Liverpool to New York and Jamaica. They were Letters of Marque, of 22 guns and 84 men each; I wish we may get them safe to America. The Squadron itself is got into Holland, with the two Prize Men-of-War, where they are all refitting. Great Damage has been done to the English Coal Trade, and 400 Prisoners have been taken, which will more than redeem the rest of our People from their Captivity in England, if we can get them safe from Holland to France; but I suppose the English will endeavour to intercept us, and recover their Ships, if possible. With great Esteem for yourself and the Committee, I have the honour to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

1050. TO JONATHAN LORING AUSTIN (D. S. W.)

Passy, Oct. 20, 1779.

SIR: — I received your several favours of June 10, July 12 and 27.[1] It gave me Pleasure to hear of your safe arrival in your native Country, and I am obliged to you for the Intelligence your Letters contain, which I hope you will continue, and for the Newspapers. This Campaign in Europe has not been so active as was expected, owing to contrary Winds and other accidents, which a long time prevented the junction of the French and Spanish fleets,

[1] The letters of June 10 and July 27 are in A. P. S. — ED.

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and afterward the meeting with that of the English. But something may yet be done before Winter. The American Flag has, however, disturbed the British Coasts, interrupted their home trade a good deal, and alarmed them with apprehensions of Descents in different places: Our little Squadron, under Commodore Jones, has also lately taken two of their men-of-War and brought them to Holland with near 400 Prisoners, which will be a means, I hope, of delivering the rest of our Countrymen who are confined in English Prisons. Here is nothing worth your Acceptance that one can propose to you. I wish you Success in any Business you may undertake, being with much Regard, sir, etc.

B. FRANKLIN.

My Grandson presents his Respects.

1051. TO M. STADEL (D. S. W.)

Passy, Oct. 20, 1779.

SIR: — I received the Letter you did me the honour of writing to me, enclosing a Project of raising a Regiment for the Service of the United States, of which you desire my Sentiment.[1] The Congress, I believe, have never had any Intention of raising Troops in Europe and transporting them to America; the Expence would be too great for them, and the Difficulty extreme, as the English command their seas, and would often intercept their transports. And having myself no Orders relative to such an Object that might authorise me to encourage the project, I cannot give the least

[1] The letter and "project," bearing date October 20, 1779, are in A. P. S. — ED.

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Expectation that it would be accepted. We are, nevertheless, oblig'd to the Officer for his friendship in making the proposition, and I request that my thanks, in behalf of my country may be presented to him.

I have the honour to be, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

1052. TO THE COMMERCIAL COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS (D. S. W.)

Passy, Oct. 21, 1779

GENTLEMEN, I received the honour of yours dated the 21st of July, containing an Extract from Mr. Pollock's Letter to you, in which he mentions his Drafts on Mr. Delap for 10,897 Dollars, and his Expectation that in case of any difficulty I will see those Bills paid.[1] I should certainly do every thing in my power to support the Credit of the States, and every Person acting under their authority: But I have been so exhausted by great and unexpected Drafts and Expences that I am glad those Bills have never been proposed to me, as I could not have taken upon myself to pay them. And I beg that you would not in future have any dependance of that kind upon me without knowing beforehand from me that I shall be able to pay what is desired. I hope you will excuse my giving this Caution, which is forc'd from me by the Distress and Anxiety such occasional and unforeseen demands have occasioned me.

I have the honour to be, gentlemen, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

[1] Oliver Pollock, merchant, made a claim upon Congress in 1786 for the payment of these unpaid bills. The drafts had been drawn upon Samuel and J. H. Delap, U.S. commercial agents at Bordeaux. — ED.

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1053. TO A FRIEND IN AMERICA[1]

Passy, October 25, 1779.

—— I RECEIVED your kind letter of February 14th, the contents of which gave me a kind of melancholy satisfaction. The greater ease you will now enjoy makes some compensation in my mind for the uncomfortable circumstance that brought it about. I hope you will have no more affliction of that kind, and that, after so long and stormy a day, your evening may be serene and pleasant.

The account you have had of the vogue I am in here has some truth in it. Perhaps few strangers in France have had the good fortune to be so universally popular; but the story you allude to, mentioning "mechanic rust," is totally without foundation. But one is not to expect being always in fashion. I hope, however, to preserve, while I stay, the regard you mention of the French ladies; for their society and conversation, when I have time to enjoy them, are extremely agreeable.

The enemy have been very near you indeed. When only at the distance of a mile, you must have been much alarmed. We have given them a little taste of this disturbance upon their own coasts this summer; and, though we have burnt none of their towns, we have occasioned a good deal of terror and bustle in many of them, as they imagined our Commodore Jones had four thousand troops with him for descents.

I am glad to learn that my dear sister continued in good

[1] From "A Collection of the Familiar Letters and Miscellaneous Papers of Benjamin Franklin" (Sparks), Boston, 1833, p. 171. — ED.

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health, and good spirits, and that she had learnt not to be afraid of her friend, fresh air. With the tenderest affection, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

1054. TO SAMUEL COOPER (L. C.)

Passy, Oct. 27, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

It is a long time since I have had the Pleasure of hearing from you. The Intelligence you were us'd to favour me with was often useful to our Affairs. I hope I have not lost your Friendship, together with your Correspondence. Our excellent Mr. Winthrop,[1] I see, is gone. He was one of those old Friends, for the sake of whose Society I wish'd to return and spend the small Remnant of my Days in New England. A few more such Deaths will make me a Stranger in my own Country. The Loss of Friends is the Tax a man pays for living long himself. I find it a heavy one.

You will see by the Newspapers that we have given some Disturbance to the British Coasts this Year. One little Privateer out of Dunkerque, the *Black Prince*, with a Congress commission, and a few Americans mix'd with Irish and English smugglers, went round their Islands and took 37 Prizes in less than 3 Months. The little Squadron of Commodore Jones, under the same Commission and Colours, has alarmed those Coasts exceedingly, occasioned a good deal of internal Expence, done great Damage to their Trade, and taken two Frigates, with 400 Prisoners. He is now with his principal Prizes in Holland, where he is pretty well

[1] John Winthrop died May 3, 1779. — ED.

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receiv'd, but must quit that neutral Country as soon as his Damages are repaired. The English watch with a superior Force his coming out, but we hope he will manage so as to escape their Vigilance. Few Actions at Sea have demonstrated such steady, cool, determined Bravery, as that of Jones in taking the *Serapis*.

There has been much Rumour this Summer throughout Europe, of an approaching Peace, thro' the Mediation of Russia and Holland; but it is understood to arise from the Invention of Stockjobbers and others interested in propagating such an opinion. England seems not to be yet sufficiently humbled, to acknowledge the Independence of the American States, or to treat with them on that Footing; and our Friends will not make a Peace on any other. So we shall probably see another Campaign.

By the Invoices I have seen and heard of, sent hither with Congress Interest Bills of Exchange to purchase the Goods, it should seem that there is not so great a want of Necessaries as of Superfluities among our People. It is difficult to conceive that your Distresses can be great, when one sees that much the greatest Part of that Money is lavish'd in Modes, Gewgaws, and Tea! Is it impossible for us to become wiser, when by simple Economy, and avoiding unnecessary Expences, we might more than defray the Charge of the War. We export solid Provision of all kinds, which is necessary for the Subsistence of Man, and we import Fashions, Luxuries, and Trifles. Such Trade may enrich the Traders, but never the Country.

The Good Will of all Europe to our Cause as being the Cause of Liberty, which is the Cause of Mankind, still continues, as does the universal Wish to see the English Pride

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humiliated, and their Power curtailed. Those Circumstances are encouraging, and give hopes of a happy Issue. Which may God grant, and that you, my Friend, may live long a Blessing to your Country. I am, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

1055. TO JEAN HOLKER [1] (D. S. W.)

Passy, Oct. 28, 1779

DEAR SIR: — Inclos'd I send you a Packet I have just received from Morlaix, containing some of the Papers you requested me to recover, and a Receipt for the Rest.[2] You will see what M^r Diot says about the Trunks of Clothes. It will be best, I imagine, for the person who desires to have them, if he knows which they are, to describe them to M. Diot or some other Person, and order them to be bid for at the Sale. I received a quantity of apple Gelly, but no Letter. If it was for me, 1000 Thanks to good Mad^e Holker. I am ever, my dear friend, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

1056. TO MESSRS. FIZEAUX AND GRAND (D. S. W.)

Passy, October 28, 1779.

GENTLEMEN, I have advice from England that eight boxes of printing Characters are sent from London to your care for

[1] Merchant at Rouen, and French consul-general in the United States. — ED.

[2] Holker had written on behalf of a Mrs. Bullen who had "been took by the *Black Prince* and lost some Bonds and Affects the Vallue of which she esteems at 50, pounds, and offers that sum to have them back" (October 2, 1779). — ED.

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me. If they are arrived, I request you would ship them to Rouen, addressed to M. Holker there. I suppose you have Dutch Vessels frequently going there. Their value is about £100 sterling, which I desire you to get insured, Whatever charges you are at I shall repay, with thanks.

I have the honour to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

1057. TO BENJAMIN VAUGHAN (L. C.)

Passy, Nov. 9. 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I have received several kind Letters from you, which I have not regularly answered. They gave me however great Pleasure, as they acquainted me with your Welfare, and that of your Family and other Friends; and I hope you will continue writing to me as often as you can do it conveniently.

I thank you much for the great Care and Pains you have taken in regulating and correcting the Edition of those Papers. Your Friendship for me appears in almost every Page; and if the Preservation of any of them should prove of Use to the Publick, it is to you that the Publick will owe the Obligation. In looking them over, I have noted some Faults of Impression that hurt the Sense, and some other little Matters, which you will find all in a Sheet under the title of *Errata*. You can best judge whether it may be worth while to add any of them to the Errata already printed, or whether it may not be as well to reserve the whole for Correction in another Edition, if such should ever be. Inclos'd I send a more perfect copy of the *Chapter*.[1]

[1] "The Parable against Persecution;" Vaughan had reprinted it from Lord Kames's version. — ED.

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If I should ever recover the Pieces that were in the Hands of my Son, and those I left among my Papers in America, I think there may be enough to make three more such Volumes, of which a great part would be more interesting.

As to the *Time* of publishing, of which you ask my Opinion I am not furnish'd with any Reasons, or Ideas of Reasons, on which to form any Opinion. Naturally I should suppose the Bookseller to be from Experience the best Judge, and I should be for leaving it to him.

I did not write the Pamphlet you mention. I know nothing of it. I suppose it is the same, concerning which Dr. Priestley formerly asked me the same Question. That for which he took it was intitled, *A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain*, with these Lines in the TitlePage.[1]

> "Whatever is, is right. But purblind Man
> Sees but a part o' the Chain, the nearest Link;
> His Eye not carrying to that equal Beam,
> That poises all above." DRYDEN.
>
> *London, Printed M.D.C.C.X.X.V.*

It was addressed to Mr. J. R., that is, James Ralph, then a youth of about my age, and my intimate friend; afterwards

[1] Vaughan in a letter dated July 30, 1779, asked Franklin: "Pray did you write a piece on Liberty & Necessity, printed for Shackford or Shuckurgh in 1729 or 1739, with a dedication to *truth*; the burthen of the piece being that the mind was acted upon by ideas, as body was by matter; and an analysis of the mind's operations was there given out? The piece was short." Priestley made a similar inquiry (May 8, 1779): "I have just seen but have had no opportunity to read, a pamphlet in favour of the doctrine of Necessity printed, I think, in 1729, and dedicated to *Truth*. Is this the tract you told me you wrote, and could not procure me a copy of? I cannot help being desirous of knowing this circumstance." — ED.

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TO BENJAMIN VAUGHAN
PASSY, NOV 9, 1779

a political writer and historian. The purport of it was to prove the doctrine of fate, from the supposed attributes of God; in some such manner as this: that in erecting and governing the world, as he was infinitely wise, he knew what would be best; infinitely good, he must be disposed, and infinitely powerful, he must be able to execute it: consequently all is right. There were only an hundred copies printed, of which I gave a few to friends, and afterwards disliking the piece, as conceiving it might have an ill tendency, I burnt the rest, except one copy, the margin of which was filled with manuscript notes by Lyons, author of the Infallibility of Human Judgment, who was at that time another of my acquaintance in London. I was not nineteen years of age when it was written. In 1730, I wrote a piece on the other side of the question, which began with laying for its foundation this fact: "That almost all men in all ages and countries, have at times made use of prayer." Thence I reasoned, that if all things are ordained, prayer must among the rest be ordained. But as prayer can produce no change in things that are ordained, praying must then be useless and an absurdity. God would therefore not ordain praying if everything else was ordained. But praying exists, therefore all things are not ordained, etc. This pamphlet was never printed, and the manuscript has been long lost. The great uncertainty I found in metaphysical reasonings disgusted me, and I quitted that kind of reading and study for others more satisfactory.

I return the Manuscripts you were so obliging as to send me; I am concern'd at your having no other copys, I hope these will get safe to your hands. I do not remember the Duke de Chaulnes showing me the Letter you mention.

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I have received Dr. Crawford's book, but not your Abstract, which I wait for as you desire.[1]

I send you also M. Dupont's *Table Economique*, which I think an excellent Thing, as it contains in a clear Method all the principles of that new sect, called here *les Economistes*.[2]

Poor Henley's[3] dying in that manner is inconceivable to me. Is any Reason given to account for it, besides insanity?

Remember me affectionately to all your good Family, and believe me, with great Esteem, my dear Friend, yours, most sincerely, B. FRANKLIN.

[1] "The manuscripts" were three articles by Vaughan on Jamaica, Vapour, and the vis inertia.

"The letter" was sent to the Duc de Chaulnes by Mr. Vaughan and was cut from the *Public Advertiser*, giving an account of Wilson's electrical experiments.

"Dr. Crawford's book" was "Experiments and Observations on Animal Heat, and the Inflammation of Combustible Bodies," by Adair Crawford, 1779. — ED.

[2] Vaughan wrote to Franklin September 21, 1779: "I am very much distressed by not having M. Dupont's table or map of the System of the Œconomistes, which you had the goodness to promise to procure for me. I could not get it myself, nor by any of the very various people I have made use of. I therefore again have recourse to you." — ED.

[3] William Henley or Henly (Franklin spells it in the former way, Vaughan in the latter), F.R.S., electrician, inventor of the electrometer, destroyed himself in the summer of 1779. Vaughan wrote to Franklin (September 20, 1779): "Mr. Henly certainly cut his throat most deliberately. His family endeavoured to talk him into quiet, but in vain: He cut the veins with a pen-knife." — ED.

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1058. THE WHISTLE[1]

TO MADAME BRILLON

Passy, November 10, 1779.

I RECEIVED my dear friend's two letters, one for Wednesday and one for Saturday. This is again Wednesday. I do not deserve one for to-day, because I have not answered the former. But, indolent as I am, and averse to writing, the fear of having no more of your pleasing epistles, if I do not contribute to the corre pondence, obliges me to take up my pen; and as Mr. B. has kindly sent me word, that he sets out to-morrow to see you, instead of spending this Wednesday evening as I have done its namesakes, in your delightful company, I sit down to spend it in thinking of you, in writing to you, and in reading over and over again your letters.

I am charmed with your description of Paradise, and with your plan of living there; and I approve much of your conclusion, that, in the mean time, we should draw all the good we can from this world. In my opinion, we might all draw more good from it than we do, and suffer less evil, if we would take care not o give too much for *whistles*. For to me it seems, that most of the unhappy people we meet with, are become so by neglect of that caution.

You ask what I mean? You love stories, and will excuse my telling one of myself.

When I was a child of seven years old, my friends, on

[1] See Vol. I, Introduction, p. 189–195. — ED.

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a holiday, filled my pocket with coppers. I went directly to a shop where they sold toys for children; and, being charmed with the sound of a *whistle*, that I met by the way in the hands of another boy, I voluntarily offered and gave all my money for one. I then came home, and went whistling all over the house, much pleased with my *whistle*, but disturbing all the family. My brothers, and sisters, and cousins, understanding the bargain I had made, told me I had given four times as much for it as it was worth; put me in mind what good things I might have bought with the rest of the money; and laughed at me so much for my folly, that I cried with vexation; and the reflection gave me more chagrin than the *whistle* gave me pleasure.

This however was afterwards of use to me, the impression continuing on my mind; so that often, when I was tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, I said to myself, *Don't give too much for the whistle;* and I saved my money.

As I grew up, came into the world, and observed the actions of men, I thought I met with many, very many, who *gave too much for the whistle.*

When I saw one too ambitious of court favour, sacrificing his time in attendance on levees, his repose, his liberty, his virtue, and perhaps his friends, to attain it, I have said to myself, *This man gives too much for his whistle.*

When I saw another fond of popularity, constantly employing himself in political bustles, neglecting his own affairs, and ruining them by that neglect, *He pays, indeed,* said I, *too much for his whistle.*

If I knew a miser, who gave up every kind of comfortable living, all the pleasure of doing good to others, all the esteem of his fellow-citizens, and the joys of benevolent friendship,

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for the sake of accumulating wealth, *Poor man*, said I, *you pay too much for your whistle.*

When I met with a man of pleasure, sacrificing every laudable improvement of the mind, or of his fortune, to mere corporeal sensations, and ruining his health in their pursuit, *Mistaken man*, said I, *you are providing pain for yourself, instead of pleasure; you give too much for your whistle.*

If I see one fond of appearance, or fine clothes, fine houses, fine furniture, fine equipages, all above his fortune, for which he contracts debts, and ends his career in a prison, *Alas!* say I, *he has paid dear, very dear, for his whistle.*

When I see a beautiful, sweet-tempered girl married to an ill-natured brute of a husband, *What a pity*, say I, *that she should pay so much for a whistle!*

In short, I conceive that great part of the miseries of mankind are brought upon them by the false estimates they have made of the value of things, and by their *giving too much for their whistles.*

Yet I ought to have charity for these unhappy people, when I consider, that, with all this wisdom of which I am boasting, there are certain things in the world so tempting, for example, the apples of King John, which happily are not to be bought; for if they were put to sale by auction, I might very easily be led to ruin myself in the purchase, and find that I had once more given too much for the *whistle.*

Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ever yours very sincerely and with unalterable affection,

B. FRANKLIN.

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1059. FROM MLLE. LE VEILLARD TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (A. P. S.)

Dreux 18 Novembre 1779.

Vous souvient-il, Monsieur, d'avoir demandé à ce que vous appellez votre enfant une petite lettre pendant son séjour à Dreux? Il est trop bon à vous de vouloir bien qu'elle vous occupe d'elle, mais c'est bien peu pour elle de ne pouvoir que vous écrire; car en conscience elle aimeroit infiniment mieux vous voir et même vous embrasser, quoique vous disiez qu'elle ne le fasse pas de bonne grace; savez-vous que vous êtes quelquefois très injuste vis à vis de moi? vous savez sans doute un grand nombre de choses, vous avez beaucoup voyagé; vous connaissez les hommes, mais vous n'étes jamais entré dans la tête d'une fille française; eh bien! je vais vous dire leur secret; quand vous voulez en embrasser une, et qu'elle prétend que cela ne lui fait pas de peine, c'est-à-dire que cela luy fait plaisir, a présent je vous ai dit le fin de la chose, j'espère que vous ne me ferez plus de mauvaises querelles; ne m'en faites pas non plus de ne vous avoir pas écrit plutôt.

. . . . . .

Adieu, Monsieur, vous m'avez dit que lorsque vous m'écririez que vous m'aimez *un peu*, cela voudrait dire *beaucoup*. Moi je vous dis que je vous aime *beaucoup*, j'espère que vous n'en conclurez pas que je vous aime *un peu*. Ce seroit encore une injustice à vous, et je vous assure que mon *beaucoup* est à prendre dans toute sa valeur.

Bien des compliments à Mr votre petit fils, si cela ne le chagrine pas trop; j'ai l'honneur d'être, Monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissante servante

LEVEILLARD.[1]

1060. TO GIAMBATISTA BECCARIA[2] (L. C.)

Passy, Nov. 19, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

Having some time since heard of your Illness with great Concern, it gave me infinite Pleasure to learn this Day from

[1] Daughter of Franklin's friend and neighbour at Passy. — ED.

[2] This letter, translated into Italian by Prospero Balbo, was published in "Memorie istoriche intorno gli studi del Padre Giambatista Beccaria" (Turin, 1783), p. 151. — ED.

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M. Chantel, (who did me the honour of a Visit,) that you were so far recover'd as to be able to make little Excursions on Horseback. I pray God that your Convalescence may be quick and perfect, and your Health be again firmly established. Science would lose too much in losing one so zealous and active in its Cause, and so capable of accelerating its Progress and augmenting its Dominions.

I find myself here immers'd in Affairs, which absorb my Attention, and prevent my pursuing those Studies in which I always found the highest Satisfaction; and I am now grown so old, as hardly to hope for a Return of that Leisure and Tranquillity so necessary for Philosophical Disquisitions. I have, however, not long since thrown a few Thoughts on Paper relative to the Aurora Borealis, which I would send you, but that I suppose you may have seen them in the *Journal* of l'Abbé Rozier. If not I will make out a Copy, and send it to you; perhaps with some Corrections.

Every thing of your Writing is always very welcome to me; if, therefore, you have lately published any new Experiments or Observations in Physicks, I shall be happy to see them, when you have an Opportunity of sending them to me. With the highest Esteem, Respect, and Affection, I am, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

1061. TO CAPTAIN CONYNGHAM[1] (D. S. W.)

Passy, Nov. 22, 1779

SIR, It gave me great Pleasure to hear of your Escape out of Prison, which I first learnt from 6 of the Men who broke

[1] Captain Gustavus Conyngham, commander of an American cutter, *Revenge*, was taken by the *Galatea* in the spring of 1779. He notified Franklin by

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out with you and came to France in a Boat. I was anxious lest you should be retaken, and I am very glad indeed to hear of your safe Arrival at Amsterdam. I think it will be best for you to stay awhile at Dunkirk, till we see what becomes of the little Squadron from Holland, for which it is said the English are lying in wait with a superior force. The Congress resented exceedingly the inhuman Treatment you met with, and it ordered three English officers to be confined in the same manner, to abide your fate.

There are some Frenchmen returned to Dunkirk who were put by you into one of your first Prizes, which was afterwards carried into England. I wish you would adjust their Claims of Wages, Prize-Money, &c., and put them in a way of getting what may be due to them.

I write to M. Coffyn[1] by this Post to supply you with Necessaries. You will be as frugal as possible, Money being scarce with me and the Calls upon me abundant.

With great Esteem, I have, etc.

B. FRANKLIN.

1062. TO JOHN PAUL JONES (D. S. W.)

Passy, Dec. 6. 1779.

SIR, As the arrangements that M. le Duc de la Vauguyon, Ambassador of the King in Holland, must make with the States-General, for the free Departure from the Texel of

letter from Amsterdam (November 18, 1779) that on the 3d of November, with about fifty of his countrymen, he had broken out of Mill Prison: "The treatment I have received is unparalleled — Irons, Dungeons, hunger, the hangman's Cart I have experienced." — ED.

[1] Francis Coffyn, a merchant of Dunkirk. — ED.

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the French and American Vessels assembled there, may require that the English Prisoners taken in Merchant Ships, and at present on board the *Alliance*, should be in the Disposition of the Ambassador, I do hereby desire and order, that the said Prisoners be sent on board the *Pallas* and the *Vengeance* whenever M. le Duc de la Vauguyon shall require it. With much Esteem and best Wishes for your Prosperity, I have the honour to be, sir, etc.

B. FRANKLIN.

1063. TO ANDRES PEDER, COUNT BERNSTORFF[1]

(L. C.)

Passy near Paris, Dec. 22. 1779.

SIR,

I have receiv'd a Letter from M. de Chezaulx, Consul of France at Berghen in Norway, acquainting me, that two Ships, viz. the *Betsey* and the *Union*, Prizes taken from the English on their Coasts by Captain Landais, commander of the *Alliance* Frigate, appertaining to the United States of North America, which Prizes having met with bad Weather at Sea, that had damaged their Rigging and occasioned Leaks, and being weakly manned had taken Shelter in the supposed neutral Port of Berghen, in order to repair their Damages, procure an additional Number of Sailors, and the necessary Refreshments; that they were in the said Port enjoying, as they conceived, the common Rights of Hospitality, established and practised by civilized Na-

[1] Count Bernstorff (1735–1797), Minister of Foreign Affairs in Denmark (1772–1780), was a member of the Danish branch of the ancient and illustrious Austrian family of Bernstorff, which in the eighteenth century gave three distinguished statesmen to Denmark. — ED.

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tions, under the care of the above said Consul, when, on the 28th of October last, the said Ships, with their Cargoes and Papers, were suddenly seized by Officers of his Majesty, the King of Denmark, to whom the said Port belongs; the American Officers and Seamen turned out of their Possession, and the whole delivered to the English Consul.

M. de Chezaulx has also sent me the following as a Translation of his Majesty's Order, by which the above Proceedings are said to be authorized, viz. "The English minister having insisted on the restitution of two vessels, which had been taken by the American privateer called the *Alliance*, commanded by Captain Landais, and which were brought into Berghen, viz. the *Betsey* of Liverpool, and the *Union* of London, his Majesty has granted this demand on this account, because he has not as yet acknowledged the independence of the colonies associated against England, and because that these vessels for this reason cannot be considered as good and lawful prizes. Therefore, the said two ships shall be immediately liberated, and allowed to depart with their cargoes." By a subsequent Letter from the same Consul, I am informed, that a third Prize belonging to the said United States, viz. the *Charming Polly*, which arrived at Berghen after the others, has also been seized and delivered up in the same Manner; and that all the People of the three Vessels, after being thus stript of their Property (for every one of them had an Interest in the Prizes), were turn'd on shore to shift for themselves, without Money, in a strange Place, no Provision being made for their Subsistence, or for sending them back to their Country.

Permit me, Sir, to observe on this Occasion, that the

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United States of America have no War but with the English; they have never done any Injury to other Nations, particularly none to the Danish Nation; on the contrary, they are in some degree its Benefactors, as they have opened a Trade of which the English made a Monopoly, and of which the Danes may now have their Share, and, by dividing the British Empire, have made it less dangerous to its Neighbours. They conceiv'd, that every Nation whom they had not offended was by the Rights of Humanity their Friend; they confided in the Hospitality of Denmark, and thought themselves and their Property safe when under the roof of his Danish Majesty. But they find themselves stript of that Property, and the same given up to their Enemies, on this Principle only, that no Acknowledgment had yet been formally made by Denmark of the Independence of the United States; which is to say, that there is no Obligation of Justice towards any Nation with whom a Treaty, promising the same, has not been previously made. This was indeed the Doctrine of ancient Barbarians, a Doctrine long since exploded, and which it would not be for the Honour of the present Age to revive; and it is hoped that Denmark will not, by supporting and persisting in this Decision, obtain'd of his Majesty apparently by Surprise, be the first Modern Nation that shall attempt to revive it.[1]

[1] "The ancients," says Vattel, "did not conceive themselves bound under any obligation towards a people with whom they were not connected by a treaty of friendship. At length the voice of nature was heard by civilized nations; they acknowledged all mankind as brothers." An injustice of the same kind, done a century or two since by some English in the East Indies, Grotius tells us, "was not without its partisans, who maintained, that by the ancient laws of England, no one was liable to punishment in that kingdom for outrages committed against foreigners, when no treaty of alliance had been

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The United States, oppressed by, and in War with, one of the most powerful Nations of Europe, may well be suppos'd incapable in their present Infant State of exacting Justice from other Nations not disposed to grant it; but it is in human Nature, that Injuries as well as Benefits receiv'd in Times of Weakness and Distress, national as well as personal, make deep and lasting Impressions; and those Ministers are wise, who look into Futurity and quench the first Sparks of Misunderstanding between two Nations, which, neglected, may in time grow into a Flame, all the consequences whereof no human Prudence can foresee, which may produce much Mischief to both, and cannot possibly produce any Good to either. I beg leave, thro' your Excellency, to submit these Considerations to the Wisdom and Justice of his Danish Majesty, whom I infinitely respect, and who, I hope, will reconsider and repeal the Order above recited; and that, if the Prizes, which I hereby reclaim in behalf of the United States of America, are not actually gone to England, they may be stopt and re-delivered to M. de Chezaulx, the Consul of France at Berghen, in whose Care they before were, with Liberty to depart for America when the Season shall permit. But, if they should be already gone to England, I must then claim from his Majesty's Equity the Value of the said three prizes, which is estimated at £50,000 sterling, but which may be regulated by the best Information that can by any means be obtained. With the greatest Respect, I am, Sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.[1]

contracted with them." But this principle he condemns in the strongest terms. — "History of the Troubles in the Netherlands," Book xvi. — F.

[1] The answer to this letter is in L. C. (in French) endorsed by Franklin

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1064. TO JOSHUA JOHNSON (D. S. W.)

Passy, Dec. 29, 1779.

SIR: — I am much obliged by your kind Attention in sending me from time to time the American Newspapers that have come to your hands. Please to accept my thankful Acknowledgments.

"Danish Minister's letter in Answer to my Memorial." The following is a translation of the letter: —

Copenhagen, March 8, 1780.

"SIR,

Were you a person less known and respected, I should have been quite at a loss on the subject of the letter, which I have had the honour of receiving from you, which did not come to hand till the 31st of January. I should have considered it as a measure calculated to place us under a new embarrassment as painful as the first; but there is no fear nor risk with such a sage as you are, Sir, generally respected by that universe which you have enlightened, and known for that prevailing love for truth which characterizes the good man and the true philosopher. These are the titles, which will transmit your name to the remotest posterity, and in which I am particularly interested at the time, when the situation of affairs imposes on me the necessity of divesting myself of every public character, in writing to you, and only to aspire at appearing to you what I truly am, the earnest friend of peace, truth, and merit.

"This mode of thinking not only decides my personal sentiments with respect to you, but also those I have respecting the unfortunate affair, which you have thought fit to mention to me, and which, from its commencement, has given me the utmost pain. You will readily agree with me, Sir, in granting, that there are perplexing situations in which it is impossible to avoid displeasing one party. You are too equitable not to enter into ours. There would be no consolation in such cases, nor would the persons who have been led into them ever be forgiven, were it not that opportunities sometimes present themselves of being heard, and preventing in future such essential embarrassments.

"The Baron de Blome will speak to you in confidence, and with the utmost freedom on this subject; and, if my wishes can be accomplished, I shall be recompensed for all my pains, and there will only remain the agreeable recollection of having had the satisfaction of assuring you, from under my hand, of that perfect esteem with which I have the honour of being, Sir, &c.

"BERNSTORFF."

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I have the Pleasure now to acquaint you that tho' my Application, at your Request, for Arms or a Loan of Money for your Province in particular was not attended with success, the Opinion here being (as I think I formerly wrote you), that all such Applications should regularly come thro' the Congress; yet, an aid being now lately granted to that Body for the whole, there is no doubt but Maryland will obtain its share of what shall arrive in America.

If I have not corresponded with you so punctually as you might expect, and as I could have wished to do, I pray you to excuse me. I have had too much Business, with too little Help. The constant expectation of a Secretary, who had long been voted, but did not arrive, prevented my engaging such assistance as I wanted, and I have not been able by increased Application to supply the Deficiency.

I do not understand that by the Treaty of Alliance between France and America, an American taking a house and settling in France to carry on Business is exempted from the Duties & Services that would have been required of a Native of France inhabiting the same house. The *droit d'aubaine* is indeed abolished in our favour, but in other Respects I should suppose that Americans settled here, as well as Frenchmen settled in America, must, while they live as Inhabitants, be subject to the Laws of the respective Countries of which they at the same time claim and enjoy the Protection. I am sorry, however, that you find this so Inconvenient as to induce you to quit the kingdom. Particular Circumstances may have occasioned the Quartering of Soldiers on the Inhabitants last year, which in time of Peace, may rarely happen.

With great Esteem, etc. [B. F.]

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APPENDIX

1065. THE LORD'S PRAYER

Old Version

1. Our Father which art in Heaven,
2. Hallowed be thy Name.
3. Thy Kingdom come.
4. Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.
5. Give us this Day our daily Bread.
6. Forgive us our Debts as we forgive our Debtors.
   And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.

New Version by B. F.

1. Heavenly Father,
2. May all revere thee,
3. And become thy dutiful Children and faithful Subjects.
4. May thy Laws be obeyed on Earth as perfectly as they are in Heaven.
5. Provide for us this Day as thou hast hitherto daily done.
6. Forgive us our Trespasses and enable us likewise to forgive those that offend us.
7. Keep us out of Temptation, and deliver us from Evil. —

Reasons for the Change of Expression

Old Version. *Our Father which art in Heaven.*

New V. — *Heavenly Father*, is more concise, equally expressive, and better modern English. —

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Old V. — *Hallowed be thy Name.* This seems to relate to an Observance among the Jews not to pronounce the proper or peculiar Name of God, they deeming it a Profanation so to do. We have in our Language no *proper Name* for God; the Word *God* being a common or general Name, expressing all chief Objects of Worship, true or false. The Word *hallowed* is almost obsolete. People now have but an imperfect Conception of the Meaning of the Petition. It is therefore proposed to change the expression into

New V. — *May all revere thee.*

Old V. — *Thy Kingdom come.* This Petition seems suited to the then Condition of the Jewish Nation. Originally their State was a Theocracy. God was their King. Dissatisfied with that kind of Government, they desired a visible earthly King in the manner of the Nations round them. They had such Kings accordingly; but their Offerings were *due* to God on many Occasions by the Jewish Law, which when People could not pay, or had forgotten as Debtors are apt to do, it was proper to pray that those Debts might be forgiven. Our Liturgy uses neither the *Debtors* of Matthew, nor the *indebted* of Luke, but instead of them speaks of *those that trespass against us.* Perhaps the Considering it as a Christian Duty to forgive Debtors, was by the Compilers thought an inconvenient Idea in a trading Nation. — There seems however something presumptuous in this Mode of Expression, which has the Air of proposing ourselves as an Example of Goodness fit for God to imitate. *We hope you will at least be as good as we are;* you see we forgive one another, and therefore we pray that you would forgive us. Some have

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considered it in another sense, *Forgive us as we forgive others;* i.e. If we do not forgive others we pray that thou wouldst not forgive us. But this being a kind of conditional *Imprecation* against ourselves, seems improper in such a Prayer; and therefore it may be better to say humbly & modestly

New V. — *Forgive us our Trespasses, and enable us likewise to forgive those that offend us.* This instead of assuming that we have already in & of ourselves the Grace of Forgiveness, acknowledges our Dependance on God, the Fountain of Mercy for any Share we may have in it, praying that he would communicate of it to us. —

Old V. — *And lead us not into Temptation.* The Jews had a Notion, that God sometimes tempted, or directed or permitted the Tempting of People. Thus it was said he tempted Pharaoh; directed Satan to tempt Job; and a false Prophet to tempt Ahab, &c. Under this Persuasion it was natural for them to pray that he would not put them to such severe Trials. We now suppose that Temptation, so far as it is supernatural, comes from the Devil only, and this Petition continued conveys a Suspicion which in our present Conception seems unworthy of God, therefore might be altered to

New V. — *Keep us out of Temptation.* Happiness was not increas'd by the Change, and they had reason to wish and pray for a Return of the Theocracy, or Government of God. Christians in these Times have other Ideas when they speak of the Kingdom of God, such as are perhaps more adequately express'd by

New V. — *And become thy dutiful Children & faithful Subjects.*

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Old V. — *Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.*

New V. — *May thy Laws be obeyed on Earth as perfectly as they are in Heaven.*

Old V. — *Give us this Day our daily Bread.* Give us what is *ours*, seems to put us in a Claim of Right, and to contain too little of the grateful Acknowledgment and Sense of Dependance that becomes Creatures who live on the daily Bounty of their Creator. Therefore it is changed to

New V. — *Provide for us this Day, as thou hast hitherto daily done.*

Old V. — *Forgive us our Debts as we forgive our Debtors.* Matthew.

Forgive us our Sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. Luke.

1066. THE LEVÉE

In the first chapter of Job we have an account of a transaction said to have arisen in the court, or at the *levée*, of the best of all possible princes, or of governments by a single person, viz. that of God himself.

At this *levée*, in which the sons of God were assembled, Satan also appeared.

It is probable the writer of that ancient book took his idea of this *levée* from those of the eastern monarchs of the age he lived in.

It is to this day usual at the *levées* of princes, to have persons assembled who are enemies to each other, who seek to obtain favor by whispering calumny and detraction, and

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thereby ruining those that distinguish themselves by their virtue and merit. And kings frequently ask a familiar question or two, of every one in the circle, merely to show their benignity. These circumstances are particularly exemplified in this relation.

If a modern king, for instance, finds a person in the circle who has not lately been there, he naturally asks him how he has passed his time since he last had the pleasure of seeing him? the gentleman perhaps replies that he has been in the country to view his estates, and visit some friends. Thus Satan being asked whence he cometh? answers, "From going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it." And being further asked, whether he had considered the uprightness and fidelity of the prince's servant Job, he immediately displays all the malignance of the designing courtier, by answering with another question: "Doth Job serve God for naught? Hast thou not given him immense wealth, and protected him in the possession of it? Deprive him of that, and he will curse thee to thy face." In modern phrase, Take away his places and his pensions, and your Majesty will soon find him in the opposition.

This whisper against Job had its effect. He was delivered into the power of his adversary, who deprived him of his fortune, destroyed his family, and completely ruined him.

The book of Job is called by divines a sacred poem, and, with the rest of the Holy Scriptures, is understood to be written for our instruction.

What then is the instruction to be gathered from this supposed transaction?

Trust not a single person with the government of your state. For if the Deity himself, being the monarch may for

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a time give way to calumny, and suffer it to operate the destruction of the best of subjects; what mischief may you not expect from such power in a mere man, though the best of men, from whom the truth is often industriously hidden, and to whom falsehood is often presented in its place, by artful, interested, and malicious courtiers?

And be cautious in trusting him even with limited powers, lest sooner or later he sap and destroy those limits, and render himself absolute.

For by the disposal of places, he attaches to himself all the placeholders, with their numerous connexions, and also all the expecters and hopers of places, which will form a strong party in promoting his views. By various political engagements for the interest of neighbouring states or princes, he procures their aid in establishing his own personal power. So that, through the hopes of emolument in one part of his subjects, and the fear of his resentment in the other, all opposition falls before him.

1067. PROPOSED NEW VERSION OF THE BIBLE

TO THE PRINTER OF ***

SIR,

It is now more than one hundred and seventy years since the translation of our common English Bible. The language in that time is much changed, and the style, being obsolete, and thence less agreeable, is perhaps one reason why the reading of that excellent book is of late so much neglected. I have therefore thought it would be well to procure a new version, in which, preserving the sense, the turn of phrase

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and manner of expression should be modern. I do not pretend to have the necessary abilities for such a work myself; I throw out the hint for the consideration of the learned; and only venture to send you a few verses of the first chapter of Job, which may serve as a sample of the kind of version I would recommend.

A. B.

PART OF THE FIRST CHAPTER OF JOB MODERNIZED

Old Text

Verse 6. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also amongst them.

7. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

8. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

9. Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for naught?

10. Hast thou not made an hedge about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

11. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

New Version

Verse 6. And it being *levée* day in heaven, all God's nobility came to court, to present themselves before him; and Satan also appeared in the circle, as one of the ministry.

7. And God said to Satan, You have been some time absent; where were you? And Satan answered I have been at my country-seat, and in different places visiting my friends.

8. And God said, Well, what think you of Lord Job? You see he is my best friend, a perfectly honest man, full of respect for me, and avoiding every thing that might offend me.

9. And Satan answered, Does your Majesty imagine that his good conduct is the effect of mere personal attachment and affection?

10. Have you not protected him, and heaped your benefits upon him, till he is grown enormously rich?

11. Try him; — only withdraw your favor, turn him out of his places, and withhold his pensions, and you will soon find him in the opposition.

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1068. À MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE LA ROCHE, À AUTEUIL

J'AI parcouru, mon cher ami, le petit livre de poésies de M. Helvétius, dont vous m'avez fait cadeau. Le poëme sur *le Bonheur* m'a donné beaucoup de plaisir, et m'a fait ressouvenir d'une petite chanson à boire, que j'ai faite il y a quarante ans sur le même sujet, et qui avoit à-peu-près le même plan, et plusieurs des mêmes pensées, mais bien densement exprimées. La voici.

Singer

Fair Venus calls; her voice obey,
In beauty's arms spend night and day.
The joys of love all joys excel,
And loving's certainly doing well.

Chorus

Oh! no!
Not so!
For honest souls know,
Friends and a bottle still bear the bell.

Singer

Then let us get money, like bees lay up honey;
We'll build us new hives, and store each cell.
The sight of our treasure shall yield us great pleasure;
We'll count it, and chink it, and jingle it well.

Chorus

Oh! no!
Not so!
For honest souls know,
Friends and a bottle still bear the bell.

Singer

If this does not fit ye, let's govern the city,
In power is pleasure no tongue can tell;
By crowds though you're teased, your pride shall be pleased,
And this can make Lucifer happy in hell!

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Chorus

Oh! no!
Not so!
For honest souls know,
Friends and a bottle still bear the bell.

Singer

Then toss off your glasses, and scorn the dull asses,
Who, missing the kernel, still gnaw the shell;
What's love, rule, or riches? Wise Solomon teaches,
They're vanity, vanity, vanity still.

Chorus

That's true;
He knew;
He'd tried them all through;
Friends and a bottle still bore the bell.

C'est un chanteur, mon cher Abbé, qui exhorte ses compagnons de chercher *le bonheur* dans *l'amour*, dans *les richesses* et dans *le pouvoir*. Ils répliquent, chantant ensemble, que *le bonheur* ne se trouve pas en aucunes de ces choses, et qu'on ne le trouve que dans *les amis* et *le vin*. A cette position, le chanteur enfin consent. La phrase "*bear the bell*," signifie en François *remporter le prix*.

J'ai souvent remarqué, en lisant les ouvrages de M. Helvétius, que quoique nous étions nés et élevés dans deux pays si éloignés l'un de l'autre, nous nous sommes rencontrés souvent dans les mêmes pensées; et c'est une réflexion bien flatteuse pour moi, que nous avons aimé les mêmes études, et autant que nous les avions connus, les mêmes amis,[1] *et la même femme*.[2]

Adieu! mon cher ami, &c. B. F.

[1] Messrs. Voltaire, Hume, Turgot, Marmontel, d'Holbach, Le Roy, les Abbés Morellet et la Roche, &c. &c. — W. T. F.

[2] Madame Helvétius.

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1069. À MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ MORELLET

Passy, le ***.

Vous m'avez souvent égayé, mon très-cher ami, par vos excellentes chansons à boire; en échange, je désire vous édifier par quelques réflexions Chrétiennes, morales et philosophiques, sur le même sujet.

In vino veritas, dit le sage. *La vérité est dans le vin.* Avant Noé donc, les hommes, n'ayant que de l'eau à boire, ne pouvoient pas trouver la vérité. Ainsi ils s'égarèrent, ils devinrent abominablement méchants, et ils furent justement exterminés par *l'eau* qu'ils aimoient à boire.

Ce bon-homme Noé, ayant vu que par cette mauvaise boisson tous ses contemporains avoient péri, le prit en aversion; et Dieu, pour le désaltérer, créa la vigne, et lui révéla l'art d'en faire du vin. Par l'aide de cette liqueur, il découvrit maintes et maintes vérités; et depuis son temps, le mot "de*vine*r" a été en usage, signifiant originairement *découvrir par le moyen du* VIN. Ainsi le patriarche Joseph prétendoit de*vine*r au moyen d'une coupe ou verre de VIN;[1] liqueur qui a reçu ce nom pour marquer qu'elle n'étoit pas une invention humaine, mais di*vine*; (autre preuve de l'antiquité de la langue Françoise, contre M. Gébelin.)[2] Aussi, depuis ce temps, toutes les choses excellentes, même les Déités, ont été appelées di*vine*s ou di*vini*tés.

On parle de la conversion de l'eau en vin, à la noce de

[1] L'orateur Romain, qui est bien connu par ses mauvaises poësies, d'être *un buveur d'eau*, confesse franchement, dans son livre *De Di*VIN*atione*, qu'il ne savoit pas *deviner*. "*Quid futurum sit non di*VINO." — AUTHOR.

[2] Author of "*Le Monde primitif comparé au Monde moderne.*"

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Cana, comme d'un miracle. Mais cette conversion est faite tous les jours, par la bonté de Dieu, sous nos yeux. Voilà l'eau qui tombe des cieux sur nos vignobles, et alors elle entre dans les racines des vignes pour être changée en vin; preuve constante que Dieu nous aime, et qu'il aime à nous voir heureux. Le miracle particulier a été fait seulement pour hâter l'opération, dans une circonstance de besoin soudain, qui le demandoit.

Il est vrai que Dieu a aussi instruit les hommes à réduire le vin en eau. Mais quelle espèce d'eau? C'est *l'eau*-de-vie. Et cela, afin que par-là ils puissent, au besoin, faire le miracle de Cana, et convertir l'eau ordinaire en cette espèce excellente de vin, qu'on appelle *punch!*

Mon frère Chrétien, soyez bienveillant et bienfaisant comme lui, et ne gâtez pas son bon ouvrage. Il a fait le vin pour nous réjouir. Quand vous voyez votre voisin à table verser du vin dans son verre, ne vous hâtez pas à y verser de l'eau. Pourquoi voulez-vous noyer la *vérité?* Il est vraisemblable que votre voisin sait mieux que vous ce qui lui convient. Peut-être il n'aime pas l'eau; peut-être il ne veut mettre que quelques gouttes, par complaisance pour la mode; peut-être il ne veut pas qu'un autre observe combien peu il en met dans son verre. Donc, n'offrez l'eau qu'aux enfans; c'est une fausse politesse, et bien incommode. Je vous dis ceci comme homme du monde; et je finirai, comme j'ai commencé, en bon Chrétien, en vous faisant une observation religieuse bien importante, et tirée de l'Ecriture Sainte; savoir que l'apôtre Paul conseilloit bien sérieusement à Timothée de mettre du vin dans son eau pour la santé; mais que pas un des apôtres, ni aucuns des saints pères, n'ont jamais conseillé de mettre *de l'eau dans le vin!*

B. F.

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P. S. Pour vous confirmer encore plus dans votre pieté et reconnoissance à la Providence Divine, réfléchissez sur la situation qu'elle a donnée au *coude*. Vous voyez aussi que les animaux qui doivent boire l'eau qui coule sur la terre, s'ils ont des jambes longues, ont aussi un cou long, afin qu'ils puissent atteindre leur boisson sans la peine de se mettre à genoux. Mais l'homme, qui étoit destiné à boire du vin, doit être en état de porter le verre à sa bouche. Si le coude avoit été placé plus près de la main, la partie d'avant auroit été trop courte pour approcher le verre de la bouche; et s'il avoit été placé plus près de l'épaule, la partie seroit si longue qu'il porteroit le verre au-delà de la tête. Ainsi nous aurions été *tantalisés*. Mais par la présente situation du coude nous sommes en état de boire à notre aise; le verre venant justement à la bouche. — Adorons donc, le verre à la main, cette sagesse bienveillante! Adorons, et buvons!

1070. SOME DIRECTIONS FOR THE DRAWING OUT THE TONE FROM THE GLASSES OF THE ARMONICA (A. P. S.)

BEFORE you sit down to play, the Fingers should be well wash'd with Soap and Water, and the Soap well rins'd off.

The Glasses must be always kept perfectly clean from the least Greasiness; therefore suffer nobody to touch them with unwash'd hands; for even the common slight natural Greasiness of the Skin rubbed on them will prevent their sounding for a long time.

You must be provided with a Bottle of Rain Water, (Spring Water is generally too hard and produces a harsh

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Tone,) and a middling Spunge in a little Slop-Bowl, in which you must keep so much of the Water that the Spunge may be always very wet.

In a TeaCup keep also ready some fine scrap'd Chalk, free from grit, to be us'd on occasion.

The Fingers when you begin to play should not only be wet on the Surface, but the Skin a little soak'd, which is readily done by pressing them hard a few Times in the Spunge.

The first Thing after setting the Glasses in motion is to pass the Spunge slowly along from the biggest Glass to the smallest, suffering it to rest on each Glass during at least one Revolution of the Glasses, whereby they will all be made moderately wet. If too much Water is left on them, they will not sound so readily.

If the Instrument is near a Window, let the Window be shut or the Curtain drawn, as Wind or Sunshine on the Glasses dries them too fast.

When these Particulars are all attended to, and the Directions observ'd, the Tone comes forth finely with the slightest Pressure of the Fingers imaginable, and you swell it at pleasure by adding a little more Pressure, no Instrument affording more Shades, if one may so speak, of the Forte and Piano.

One Wetting with the Spunge will serve for a Piece of Music twice as long as Handel's Water-piece, unless the Air be uncommonly drying.

But a number of thin Slices of Spunge, plac'd side by side, and their Ends held fast between two strips of Wood, like Rulers, of a length equal to the Glasses, and plac'd so that the loose Ends of the Spunges may touch the Glasses

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behind, and by that means keep them constantly wet, is very convenient where one proposes to play a long time. The Spunges being properly wetted will supply the Glasses sufficiently a whole Evening, and touching the Glasses lightly do not in the least hurt the Sound.

The Powder of Chalk is useful two Ways.

Fingers, after much Playing, sometimes begin to draw out a Tone less smooth and soft, and you feel as well as hear a small Degree of Harshness. In this Case, if you dip the Ends of your wet fingers in the Chalk, so as to take up a little, and rub the same well on the Skin, it will immediately recover the smoothness of Tone desired. And if the Glasses have been sullied by Handling, or the Fingers not being just wash'd have some little Greasiness on them, so that the Sounds cannot easily be produc'd, Chalk so us'd will clean both Glasses and Fingers, and the Sounds will come out to your Wish.

A little Practice will make all this familiar; and you will also find by Trials what Part of the Fingers most readily produces the Sound from particular Glasses, and whether they require to be touch'd on the Edge chiefly, or a little more on the Side; as different Glasses require a different Touch, some pretty full on the flat side of the Brim, to bring out the best Tone, others more on the Edge, and some of the largest may need the Touch of Two Fingers at once.

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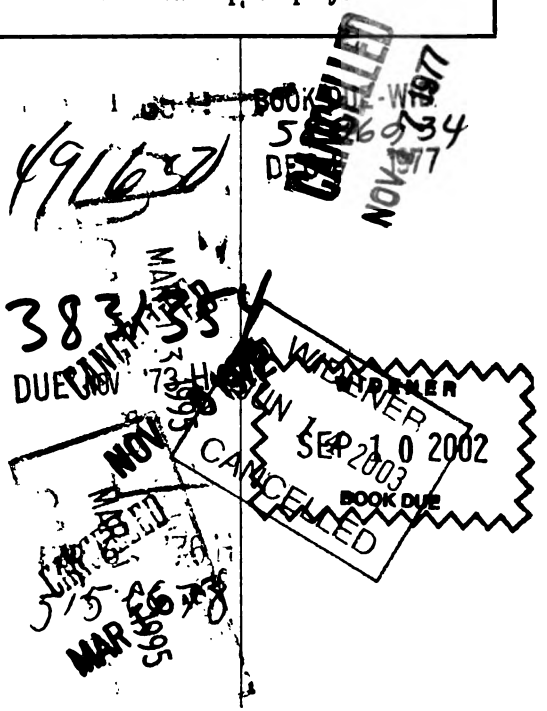

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